£250 FOR TELLING WHEN WE SHALL ENTER PRETORIA.

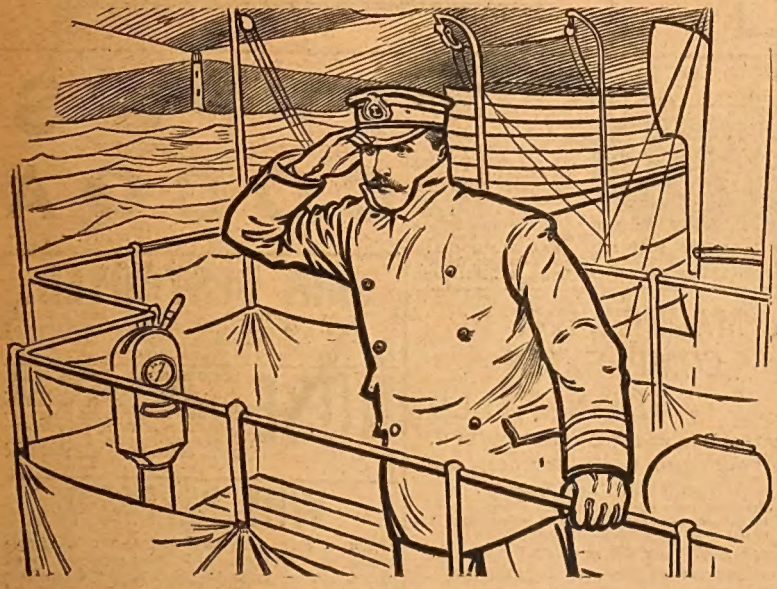
SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 577. FOR WEEK ENDING JANUARY 20TH, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

A CHIEF OFFICER AND DR TIBBLES' Vi-Cocoa

"USED IT FOR FOUR YEARS IN HIS NIGHT WATCHES!"



Mr. T. SMITH,
s.s. "New Londoner,"
Newcastle.

"Noticing that many gentlemen are testifying to the sterling quality of Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa, I think it only fair to you that I should add my humble praise. I may state that I am chief officer on a passenger steamer, and have had fifty years' experience of sea life. I have used your Vi-Cocoa for four years in my night watches, and felt immediately refreshed and invigorated for the rest of the watch.

"Make any use you please of this."

Thousands of people have tried Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa with the most satisfactory results. Those who have not done so should write at once to 60, 61, and 62 Bunhill Row, London, E.C., for a free dainty sample tin, which will be forwarded by return of post.

FREEMAN'S PUDDING POWDER

SOLD EVERYWHERE — REALLY DELICIOUS — TRADE MARK

A CHILD CAN MAKE THEM

TRY IT

Advertisements should be sent to "Short Stories" Advertisement Department, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

THOUSANDS OF LIPS

Tell of the excellence of

NATURE'S OWN BEVERAGE.
NON-INTOXICATING.

MASON'S WINE ESSENCES become famous wherever they go. They are pronounced **The Ideal** by all who try them.

6D. BOTTLE makes **60** GLASSES of the most Delicious Wine. Exquisite flavour and absolute purity. Suitable for all ages. Sample Bottle, post free, 9 stamps.

MASON'S COFFEE ESSENCE is recognised everywhere as the standard of purity. Have you tried it?

SPECIAL OFFER.
Until December 31st, every purchaser of a Sample Bottle of Wine Essence will be presented with a Sample Bottle of our COFFEE ESSENCE and a MONEY BOX.

NEWBALL & MASON, NOTTINGHAM,
Makers of MASON'S EXTRACT OF HERBS
Agents Wanted.

By Special Appointment Makers to Her Majesty.

Borax Dry Soap

is sold by grocers, oilmen, and stores, everywhere, because it is wanted everywhere.

It is easy to buy, but care is necessary, otherwise, when you come to wash clothes or scour, you will find you have taken a substitute or imitation.

Borax Dry Soap has imitators, and it is right you should know it and guard against them.

Borax Dry Soap is sold in ¼-lb., ½-lb., and 1-lb. packets.

Write for illustrated literature.

The Patent Borax Co., Limited, Ladywood, Birmingham.

No. 56. Facsimile Packet.

ROSY CHEEKS

and a lovely complexion, skin clear as Alabaster, produced by one box of **Dr. LENNOX'S Harmless Arsenic Wafers,** the only cure for Pimples, Blackheads, Sallow or Greasy Skins, no matter how bad. Price per box, privately packed with Medical and Analytical Reports by Dr. Griffiths and Granville Sharpe, F.C.S., 2/6 post free. H. LENNOX, 21 Electric Avenue, Brixton, London. Absolutely harmless to the most delicate. Thousands of testimonials.

THE ONLY EFFICACIOUS SUBSTITUTE FOR COD LIVER OIL.

DEVONSHIRE CREAM

(REALLY GENUINE.)

IN PATENT AIR-TIGHT TINS.

½lb., 1s. 4d.; 1lb., 2s. 4d.; 2lb. 4s.

INCLUDING TIN AND POSTAGE.

Mrs. CONYERS, Morchard Bishop, DEVON.

VARICOCELE.

Men who are weak and suffering from nervous exhaustion, loss of vigour, Varicocele, &c., can be successfully and permanently cured without operation or detention from business by THE DR. COLLINS most improved and rational method medical science has ever yet produced.

Particulars and proofs of successful cures sent free on receipt of address.

THE COLLINS REMEDY CO.,
Gothic House, 9 Erskine Street, Liverpool.

ATLAS LOCKSTITCH MACHINE.

Works by hand or treadle. Guaranteed 4 years. Equal in quality and size to any machine To ensure satisfaction, we will send machine on receipt of 5/- P.O. for ONE MONTH'S TRIAL. Balance can be paid 5/- Monthly. Call or write for designs and Samples of work. **39/-**

THE ATLAS SEWING MACHINE CO.,
188B High St., Camden Town, London, N.W.
63 Seven Sisters Rd., N.; 14 High Rd., Kilburn.

A MAGNIFICENT COMPLEXION GUARANTEED

By the free use of LILLIE POWDER. It nourishes, heals, soothes, and brings Health and Beauty.

Prepared from the original recipe invented by Mrs. Langtry, under the strict supervision of Her Majesty's Perruquier, Mr. W. Clarkson.

Order it of your Chemist and refuse all substitutes, as they may be injurious.

Three Tints: Blanche Naturelle, and Rachel. Of all Chemists, Hairdressers, Stores, &c.

THE LILLIE SYNDICATE,
3 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

THE MOST NUTRITIOUS.

EPPS'S

GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

COCOA

BREAKFAST—SUPPER.

HAIR DESTROYED.

Send me an envelope (stamped and addressed) and I will tell you how to remove all superfluous hair **free of charge.** (Send no money.) Address, in confidence, Miss E. V. (Room 3), 195 Oxford Street, London, W.

NOSE

MACHINES. LEES RAY, S. S. Dept., South Castle St. Liverpool, is a specialist on Ugly and Red Noses. Send stamp for particulars of his patent scientific Nose Improvers. Red Nose Cure, medically approved, 3/9. Outstanding Ear Machines, 11/6.

WHY BE FAT?

When a lady, who has discovered a simple means of Self-Cure will be happy to send particulars of same to any sufferer from this distressing complaint. Free on receipt of stamped addressed envelope. ADDRESS:

Mrs. TREVOR WELLS,
63 *HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON, W.C.*

ESTABLISHED 1851.

BIRKBECK BANK

Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane London.

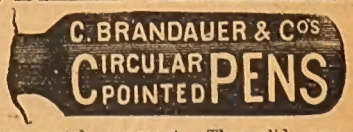
INVESTED FUNDS

£10,000,000.

The BIRKBECK ALMANACK, with full particulars, post free.

FRANCIS RAVENSCROFT, *Manager.*

SEVEN PRIZE MEDALS.



These series of pens neither scratch nor spurt. They glide over the roughest paper with the ease of a soft lead pencil. An assorted sample box for 7 stamps from the works, Birmingham.

SHORT STORIES

No. 577.] [One Penny.

For the Week Ending January 20th, 1900.

A Fiery Engagement.

"Are you enjoying yourself, Kitty?"

"Not in the least," said Kitty disdainfully.

"Then, my dear, forgive me for saying so—but you are a very stupid girl."

After which conclusive remark Colonel Lambourne jerked the off rein of his mule impatiently, and subsequently avoided a precipice with some difficulty, which effectually chilled his ardent annoyance.

Colonel Lambourne and his daughter were ascending Etna from the little village of Nicolosi below the volcano. He was commanding a regiment in Malta, and she had been brought to Sicily at immense inconvenience, so her father said, to throw off the effects of a love affair.

It was a little late for making the grand ascent, and Salvator, the guide, had been at first a little unwilling to escort them; but he had in the end yielded to pressure.

Below them lay the wide panorama of the Bay of Messina, blue as lapis lazuli, the shadowed mountains of Calabria, and the stretch of chestnut woods through which they had passed. Before them was the Valley of Desolation, that reach of black lava that corresponds to one of Dante's circles of the Inferno. The mules, jerking in their ungainly fashion from boulder to

EDITED BY C. Arthur Pearson

All rights reserved.]

Digitized by Google

boulder, had almost struggled through the last vestige of vegetation, the bracken and broom, already changing to another and more autumnal tint. High up, below the last thousand feet of the crater, lay the little Casa Inglese, the hut of refuge where the travellers sleep, and where the Italian professor of astronomy keeps watch and ward for an appointed time in the year, coming out with the bats at night in the dead stillness where there is no sound save the creak of the great telescope as it gyrates from star to star.

It was reddening with the last sunset glow, and about half a mile before them the black figure of a solitary traveller was plodding his way across the plain.

"It's a relief to see someone," said Colonel Lambourne testily. "The confounded loneliness of the place would make a cat fret."

"I like it, it suits my mood," said Kitty tersely.

"Then your mood must be a confoundedly queer one," snapped her father, and silence fell between them.

The mood of neither father nor daughter was in touch with the majesty of the great ascent, as the Sicilians call it—but the shadow of Douglas Grant lay between them, and the thought of that impecunicus captain of a marching regiment was not soothing to the mind of Colonel Lambourne.

Suddenly, without the least warning, the guide started back and caught the head of Kitty's mule, jabbering something in excited Sicilian that neither understood.

"What the dickens is the fellow about? What is it, Kitty? What was the use of keeping you at an expensive school? Good Heavens!"

The last ejaculation was wrung from him in genuine terror, as the ground apparently heaved up under his feet, and the mule collapsed into a frightened heap in a clump of bracken.

"What is it, Kitty?"

But Salvator had dragged Miss Lambourne from her mule, and was pulling her down behind a rock boulder with a gesture of frightened determination.

The last ejaculation was wrung from him in genuine terror, as the ground apparently heaved up under his feet, and the mule collapsed into a frightened heap in a clump of bracken.

Colonel Lambourne said no more—there was no need for words, since in another moment he became absolutely certain that they were in the midst of one of those convulsions of nature so horrible to contemplate—a volcanic eruption.

The darkness fell with a blinding suddenness that was like a pall, relieved now and again by a flash of lightning, and a roll of thunder that echoed among the lonely, silent hills, scaring the very wild beasts from their lair.

Looking up over the edge of his shelter, Colonel Lambourne saw that his daughter was close at hand, and that she had instinctively thrown her arms round a jutting ledge of rock, while Salvator was endeavouring to tether the frightened mules. Above them the crater suddenly flared into living lurid flame, and he shivered as he saw burning lumps of lava, belching out from the black mouth, hurled down the slope towards them in a rain of fire.

"Kitty," he cried.

"Yes, papa," she answered.

"I don't think we shall ever come out of this alive."

"God knows," said Kitty. And he took sudden comfort from her steady voice.

He only spoke once again in the course of the next half-hour.

Digitized by Google

"Kitty—Kitty, I wish that you had married Grant—and that we had never attempted to ascend this dreadful mountain."

"It is a little late to think of that, father dear."

And the Colonel groaned dismally.

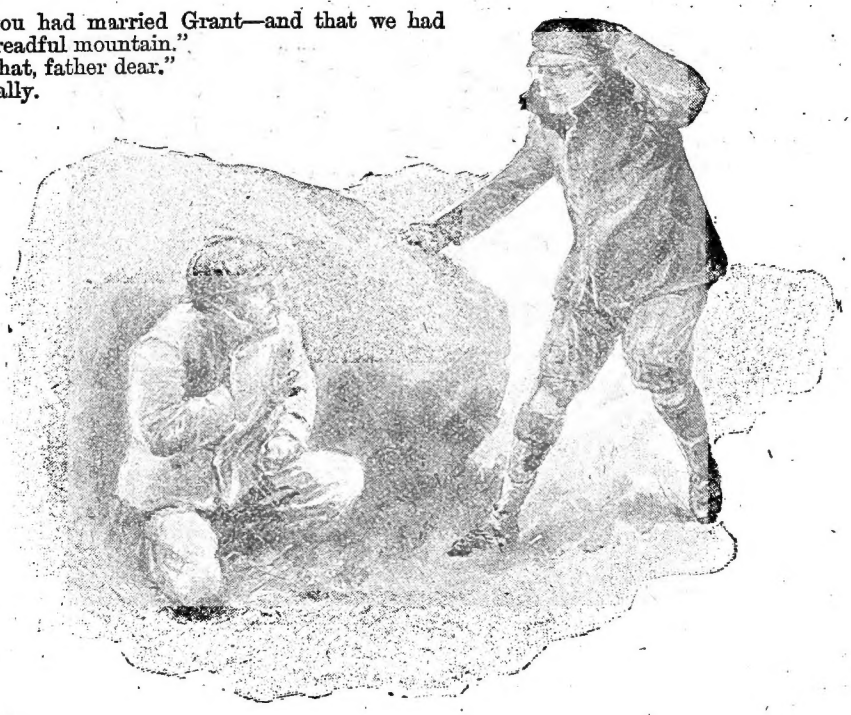
It seemed to him that they had crouched there for many hours in that horrible suspense when there was a cry from Salvator.

The wind had risen, and it was all that they could do to sustain their foothold upon the boulders, although Kitty was the more sheltered of the two.

The guide had taken up his position near the mules, and at some distance from the Lambournes, and his situation being somewhat exposed, he had been struck by a falling mass of rock—a huge block which was whirling by, with considerable force.

"Oh, Santa Maria!"

To the Colonel's horror, he saw his daughter move from her secure shelter at the cry, and make her way over to the Sicilian with a Divine impulse of pity. Her change of position took her completely out of sight into the darkness, and the Colonel remained clinging to his rock spur in a pitifully broken condition of despair and terror.



"Colonel Lambourne, if I go after your daughter it will be at the risk of my own life, and I shall demand a certain *quid pro quo*. I do not see why I should risk my life to save yours, to put the matter on a strictly business footing."

The sound of a voice behind him was like that of an angel from Heaven.

"Colonel Lambourne, is it you in reality? I have been all this time making my way down here—I had to cross the plain on my hands and knees. I saw that there was a lady in the party, and I thought I might be of some use."

"Grant! Oh, thank Heaven," said the elder man with a sob. "This is horrible. Kitty has gone—the guide was hurt, and she went after him into the darkness. If she is killed, I shall never dare to go home and face her mother."

There was something so supremely selfish in the attitude of the whole man that Douglas Grant may be forgiven if the thought flashed across his mind of turning the situation to his own advantage. He had struggled after the party at the risk of his life, over the exposed plain.

Being a man of no small resource, he had timed his ascent of Etna well, and though out of sight had kept in touch with the Lambournes' movements since they had left Malta. Now he stood disdainfully peering down through the darkness at the white face below him.

He was a man to whom fear was an unknown quality, and it seemed comtemptible to him that where Kitty's safety was concerned anyone should dare to know a qualm of selfish terror.

He steadied himself against the hurly-burly of the wind, and spoke clearly.

"Colonel Lambourne, if I go after your daughter, it will be at the risk of my own life and I shall demand a certain *quid pro quo*; I do not see why I should risk my life to save yours, to put the matter on a strictly business footing."

He hated himself for the horrible attitude he had assumed. His golden-haired Kitty was in danger of her life, and he dared to barter and hesitate even for a moment. She was wandering on the mountain side, her foot perhaps on the brink of one of those precipitous crevices that are formed from the treacherous lava streams. A slip might mean destruction, and he was still hesitating—but this was his chance in life, and in spite of himself he took it.

"I suppose you want Kitty?" said the Colonel, dully. "That is the only *quid pro quo* possible."

"Yes, I want Kitty."

"Look here, Grant, have you such a thing as a flask about you?"

Grant nodded, but made no further movement towards his pocket.

"You shall have Kitty," said Lambourne jerkily, as though the words were torn from him against his will. "Give me the flask."

And Grant, tossing the silver and crystal flagon, full of brandy, into his lap, leaped the boulder, and disappeared into the darkness.

* * * * *

It seemed to Colonel Lambourne that some hours must have passed since he drank that life-giving, courage-reviving draught, and felt comforted to the bottom of his soul.

When he woke at last from an agreeable doze, he found that the eruption had ceased as suddenly as it had begun, and that above him, in a clear heaven, the stars were shining. The crater was not entirely inactive, but

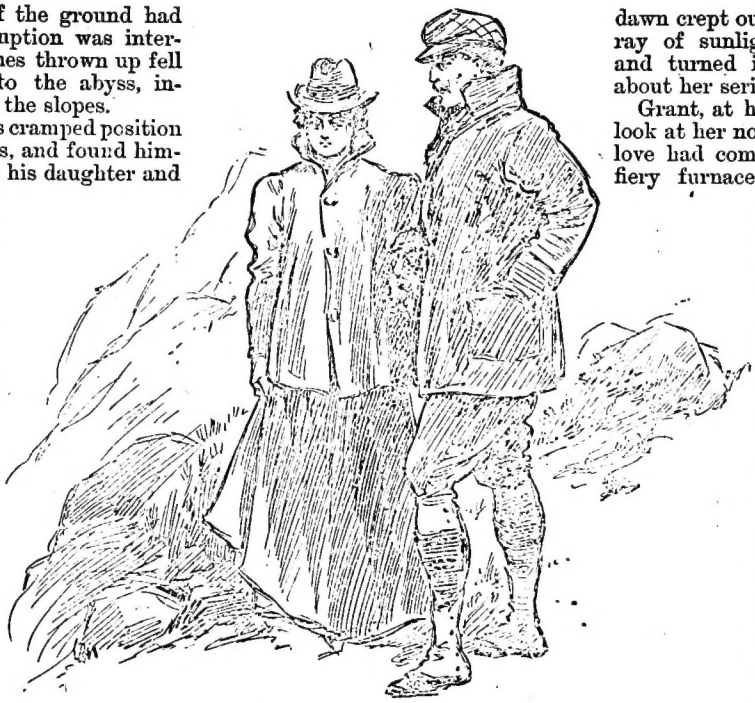
Digitized by Google

the awful heaving of the ground had ceased; the lava eruption was intermittent, and the stones thrown up fell back harmlessly into the abyss, instead of bombarding the slopes.

He moved from his cramped position at the sound of voices, and found himself face to face with his daughter and Grant, who were coming over the rocks towards him hand in hand.

One glance at Kitty's face told him that her night upon the mountain side had not been one entirely of terror for her, and coming up to her father, she took his hand.

"Poor father," she said gently, "I am so sorry that you were frightened. Douglas says that it is quite safe to move up to the Casa Inglese now. Salvator is better, he was only stunned; and we can get him some food up there before going back to Nicolosi."



Kitty and her lover stood looking down at the sunlit valley with a prayer of thanksgiving in their hearts.

Grant cast one look at the flask with an eye to the prostrate guide.

"There is a drop or two in the bottom, I think," said the Colonel feebly, holding it out towards him. "I wonder what your mother will say, Kitty?"

But Kitty had no thought for any trouble to come, as she mounted her mule again, and turned her face towards the sun-rising. The first faint flush of the dawn crept out of the East, and a ray of sunlight caught her hair and turned it to glittering gold about her serious face.

Grant, at her bridle-rein, cast a look at her now and again. Their love had come to them out of a fiery furnace indeed, and might perchance be all the more steadfast in the memory of that night face to face with death.

When they reached the little house, the Italian Professor, grey and dishevelled after his night of anxiety, looked out of the window to wish them good morning. "My faith," he said, "it is always the unexpected that happens, and the Barometer gave very short warning—I gave you up for lost long ago."

"I should have thought the world well lost for love," whispered Grant, as he lifted Kitty from her mule, while Colonel Lambourne went inside the hut to boast to the professor, in execrable Italian, of the courage and fortitude he had displayed under superhuman difficulties.

But Kitty and her lover stood looking down at the sunlit valley with a prayer of thanksgiving in their hearts.

C. E. C. WEIGALL.

SCOGGS: "Where is your better half?"

BOGGS: "Got the sulks and wouldn't come. In fact, just at present, she's my bitter half."

"I SHALL not go out of that door, sir," said the angry subscriber, "until I have had an explanation."

"Oh, all right," responded the editor. "The window is just as handy."

MRS. KNERVZ rang the bell for the domestic. "Norah," she said when the kitchen lady appeared, "I'll feed the canary myself after this. The doctor says I must take more exercise."

LITTLE JOHNNY: "Mamma, let's play I am your mother and you are my little boy."

Mamma: "Very well, dear; how shall we play it?"

Little Johnny: "I'll tell you; you start to do something and I'll tell you not to."

SHE: "Why does a woman take a man's name when she gets married?"

He: "Why does she take everything else he has?"

"How absurd to say that all the world loves a lover!"

"Isn't it true?"

"Certainly not. How can it be true so long as the lover usually has rivals?"

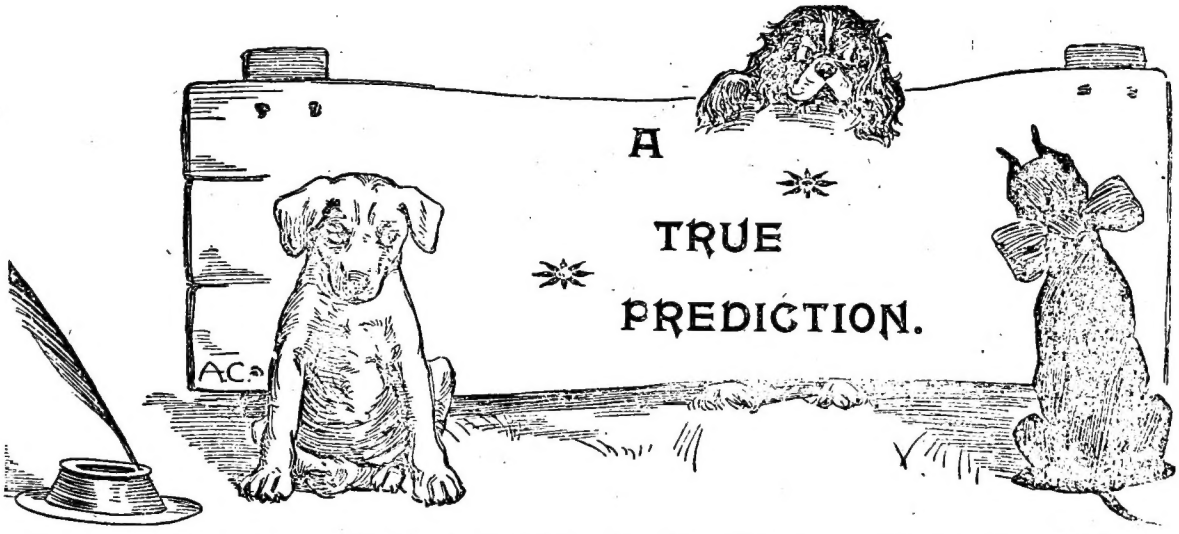
MOTHER: "What are you doing with papa's hair-restorer?"

Ethel: "Willie and I are going to make your moth-eaten muff as good as new."

"How did those two delightful young people happen to drift apart?"

"Most natural thing in the world. He was after a heart, and she after a bank account. Time developed the fact that neither of them had what the other wanted."

Digitized by Google



"You cannot tell my fortune. May I ask why?" he demanded.

The gipsy shook her head.

"But I have entered this tent for that special purpose," said Captain Murray, and he laid his hands upon the table with their palms uppermost.

"I cannot do it," came in something like a gasp from the draped figure.

"You mean that you won't do it?"

No answer.

A look of annoyance passed over his face, followed by one of something approaching alarm, but it was momentary. He looked at his hands and then at the gipsy.

"Look here," he ventured again, "I am not a fool. It is plain to me that you see something in my hand which you prefer not to speak about—which you think it better that I should not know?"

The veiled figure bowed in affirmation.

Captain Murray glanced round the tent somewhat cautiously, as if afraid of listeners. "Madame," he began earnestly, "I insist upon you telling me. I come from a superstitious race—a clan that in days gone by placed great faith in the warnings of people like yourself. I am not exactly a believer in your art, but there are traditions in my family of such predictions as, I fancy, you would keep from me. I may say I am ordered abroad. If your prediction has to do with my career as a soldier——"

"You leave next Tuesday," she interrupted.

"Yes, a week to-day; but you seek to change the topic of conversation. At the same time, I am puzzled to know how you should have become acquainted with my affairs."

"Am I not a fortune-teller?"

"By profession, yes. But whether you have the powers you claim is another question."

"Test me," she answered somewhat defiantly.

"That is what I am anxious to do, but you refuse. Perhaps you can tell me where I am going?"

"Certainly I can; such questions are easy. You are going to South Africa, and you got the news last week. What is more you are going in the place of another man who has met with a bicycle accident."

"Of course, you may have learnt all this in the town," he said. "But we are getting away on a side issue. Tell me what you were afraid to disclose a minute ago. I do not believe in your art, but I am curious."

"For an unbeliever you appear to be very much in earnest."

"If your prediction proves true you may make a disciple."

"But I am not anxious to make disciples. Please do not press me. I would rather you did not ask me to tell your fortune."

"Well, I fear I must insist upon it." There was just a little hardness in his voice. "I have bought this ticket against my will, but, having invested in it, I am determined to have my money's worth. You see I am Scotch."

The gipsy remained silent.

"You mean it well, no doubt, and possibly think I am afraid to hear bad news," he continued.

No answer.

"Very well. I do not leave this tent until you carry out the terms of the contract, so your lucrative trade must come to a stop until my fortune is told. I will not budge from here, and if you leave I follow you." He folded his arms with the resolute air of a man who has put his foot down.

There was a silence, and he amused himself by examining various articles in the tent, until a clamour arose outside.

"Hurry up! Hurry up! Are you going to stay all day?" shouted a masculine voice. "You must have had your half-guinea's worth by now."

Captain Murray got up and walked to the entrance of the tent.

"My fortune is not told yet," he called out. "In fact, the fortune-teller is at present on strike—or rather we are engaged in a game of patience."

Without paying further heed to their murmurs of disapproval he came back to his seat opposite the mutinous gipsy.

"I believe gipsies do not object to smoking," he said, "but if you would rather that I did not— No? Very well, then," as the figure shook itself. "I will light up. Can I offer you one?"

An indignant shake of a cloak was the only reply. There followed another interval of silence.

Digitized by Google

"Palm or cards?" she demanded suddenly, as her patience gave out.

"Both," was his brief reply, and he spread out his palms, which she examined through a glass.

"Shuffle!" she said, passing him the cards. "Now cut into three. Wealth, happiness, and an engagement," she began. "Really your fortune opens better than I expected from your hand. Let me see, we will make you clubs—club king."

Then she began to spread out the cards on the table, pausing every now and then as she carefully placed each card. She drew her cloak tightly around her.

"Why do you place them so?" he asked. "I thought the cards had to be spread out in the order they come after cutting."

"I will tell your fortune, sir, but allow me to retain the secrets of our craft. Be good enough to show me your palms again," she demanded with an air of pretty authority.

"You have chosen the right profession—that of soldier—but you are pessimistic. Try and get out of the habit of taking a dark view of things, for this may some day interfere with what ought to be a well-developed judgment. Keep a guard upon your temper, which is hasty and inclined to lead you into trouble."

Then she turned to the cards again.

"There is some present trouble or annoyance. Spades seem to hound you. It has to do with a fair woman."

He leaned forward and listened eagerly.

"The fault seems to rest with you. I see what it is. You look dark towards another man, who, in turn, looks at the fair lady; but she turns her back upon him. You are jealous. Three of clubs between you and a blonde man. Spade—spade, club again. Your attachment to the fair lady has not ended happily; in fact, the engagement looks as if it were broken off."

"Yes, yes, go on," he said somewhat impatiently, as she paused.

"You have misjudged this fair lady, for you fancy she is in love with the blonde man."

"So she is!" he jerked out.

"Sir!"

"Oh! I beg pardon. Please go on. This is very foolish, I know, but interesting."

"You can see by the cards that she is not in love with him, for there are no love cards between them."

"Are you sure?" he asked gravely.

"Quite. See here," and she laid her hand on the king of hearts, which stood for his rival. "Only light cards are between her and the fair man. The breaking of the engagement causes her sorrow—spades again, you see."

"By Heaven, is that so?" he asked earnestly.

He put his finger down on the king of clubs. "Isn't that I?"

"Yes," said the gipsy, "and as you see the love cards still cling to you and the fair lady."

"And that means that she loves me?" he asked excitedly.

"She loves you," repeated the gipsy. "There is no doubt about that."

Captain Murray thought a moment. "I wish I knew for certain—it would mean a great difference to me," he said. "Look here. I am afraid I am a bit superstitious. It is in the blood, for I am a Highlander. Your sex—your race is very clever. Give me your advice. I am, or was, engaged to the dearest girl in all the world. A month ago a cousin of her's came to stay with them. He is rather a lady's man, and I fancied that Marjory—I mean the young lady to whom I was engaged—was just a little too free with him. Three nights ago my stupid jealousy got the better of me, and I said what I had no business to say. My little girl was very independent and handed me back my ring. Now I have to go away, and I am feeling wretched. I would go and apologise, but to be repulsed would drive me mad. Yet I have been a ruffian, if what the cards say be true."

"Especially as she still loves you," said the gipsy softly.

"If I were only sure of that—but there are only the cards for it, and it's all very foolish to trust to them. No, I am done for, unless you can suggest something."

"I can only tell you that she loves you dearly."

"But you have only the cards to show that." He was pacing up and down the tent now.

"I have another proof that what I say is true."

"You have?" he stopped shortly. "Speak woman. Speak!" he cried excitedly.

"Hurry up! Hurry up!" shouted those outside.

"Come nearer to me," she said softly. "You know Marjory was just a little to blame."

"No, she wasn't," he jerked out with a snap.

"Don't contradict me."

The veiled figure arose and placed her hand upon his arm.

"You must not reveal a word of this to anyone, but within the next five minutes or less you will kiss Marjory."

He glanced at the mysterious hooded figure.

"I would make a handsome donation to this bazaar, if I thought she would kiss me within the next year," he said gloomily.

Then her hold upon his wrist lightened, she stood upon her tip toes and whispered one word in his ear. In a second her disguise was torn off, his arms were about her, and her head nestled on his shoulder.

"Marjory, darling, I came to this bazaar purposely to get a glimpse of you. I wondered why you were not here, and I dared not ask anyone."

At this moment the clamorous crowd outside, unable to restrain their impatience longer, broke into the tent, but the fortune telling was over for that day.

ATHOL FORBES.

Digitized by Google

Lunch for Two, at the Reindeer.

One pleasant morning in May, the housekeeper's bell at 13 Grafton Place, Piccadilly, was rung by a man, whose manner, despite the absence of uniform, had a suggestion of "peeler" about it. He was Inspector Barton, of New Scotland Yard; and his companion was Sergeant Fleming.

"There's a gentleman lives here, name of Wilson, isn't there?"

"Yes; there is."

Wilson's real name was Nosovich, and he was wanted by the police. His extradition had been demanded by the Russian Government, on the ground of having defrauded an Odessa bank of the sum of 80,000 roubles. Barton, however, didn't tell the housekeeper this.

"Not lived here long, has he?"

"Not long. Two months only."

"H'm, just corresponds. Is he anything like that?"

He handed the housekeeper a photograph, which she inspected.

"Well, he—yes, he is like this. But he's got no moustache."

The Inspector was prepared for a trifling discrepancy of that kind.

"No moustache, eh! What rooms does he occupy?"

The housekeeper explained—a suite on the first floor.

"Mr. Wilson in now, do you know?"

"I fancy so. He generally is about this time." It was then half-past ten.

Inspector Barton and his companion went upstairs, but there were told a different tale. Mr. Wilson was out—had gone out just before ten. Tovey, his man, proved rather uncommunicative.

"How's he gone—driving, riding, or how?"

"I couldn't say, sir, I was at the back when he started."

"And you don't know where he's gone to?"

Tovey shook his head. "I don't."

"When will he be back, then—did he say?"

Tovey made a sly scrutiny of the inspector before replying. "I don't think he'll be long, sir. He'd have told me in that case."

The valet was a different kind of subject from Mrs. Luck; being as foxey as the latter was ingenuous. Inspector Barton concluded promptly that Tovey was not telling the truth—or not the whole truth; and, further, that his own character and mission were suspected by the man.

"The fellow's in league with his master," he whispered to Fleming. "Wonder if they've had a hint of our visit?"

"It's quite possible."

"In that case Nosovich has decamped, and the soone we get on his track the better."

Nosovich had been "wanted" since February, and had been hunted for in vain in half the capitals of Europe. It was an anonymous letter, received at New Scotland Yard that morning, which put the English authorities on his track.

Accomplice or no, it was clear Tovey was right: Wilson was not in. Where had he gone—that was the question?

Tovey knew, but wouldn't tell—so Barton concluded. Mrs. Luck, when appealed to again, said she hadn't noticed Mr. Wilson's departure. It seemed as if the detectives had lost the scent.

At the corner of the first turning was a fishmonger's. Inspector Barton stopped here a moment, to pick up information.

"Know anything of a Mr. Wilson, at No. 13?"

"Oh, yes. Serve him with fish."

"Don't happen to have seen him this morning—do you?"

Spragg didn't; but an assistant, who was by, could give some information. Mr. Wilson had driven off in a dog-cart about ten o'clock.

"In a dog-cart, eh?"

"Yes, one of Scroggie's. Scroggie's man brought it to the door."

Scroggie was a livery-stable keeper, well-known in that region. The assistant further stated that the vehicle went off by way of Piccadilly, but of course he couldn't supply the destination. Barton made his way to Scroggie's yard, to prosecute inquiries there.

"Where to, sir? He's gone to Whittenham—Whittenham-on-Thames, close by Hampton Court."

"So he said, I s'pose."

"Well, yes—so he said; and I'm inclined to think it's right. If you were to look in at the 'Reindeer' about half-past one; I guess you'd find him having lunch."

Scroggie went on to explain. Whittenham was a newly-discovered haunt, just then the fashion with a certain class—theatrical people, and their hangers-on. He was constantly letting out vehicles to go there.

It was a pleasant drive from London—about sixteen miles; had a comfortable, old-fashioned inn—the one he'd mentioned; and to suit people who were fond of trees it boasted a clump of beeches which hadn't their equal in England.

Gradually, as Scroggie spoke, the Inspector came to the conclusion he was right. Wilson probably had gone there; and gone on pleasure bent. In which case it followed the embezzler must be still in ignorance of the fact that Scotland Yard was looking him up.

Sergeant Fleming had been left behind at No. 13 to carry out a search. Returning there for a moment,

Digitized by Google

Barton made a discovery. Tovey, the valet, had taken himself off.

"Said he was going to the corner for a drink," volunteered Fleming. "I'm pretty sure, though, he's vamoosed. He had the look of it."

There! Tovey was a confederate. Suspected before, the fact was now clear. Vamoosed—in order to warn his master!

It was a case for prompt action; the very promptest. Barton telegraphed to Whittenham, asking that the Reindeer might be watched, and followed his wire by the first train; which deposited him at Whittenham Station shortly after one o'clock.

* * * * *

No one was more surprised than William Poppleton, landlord, when his house suddenly became a resort for visitors. He was not a pushing man, hadn't advertised himself in any way, and knew next to nothing of theatres. It was luck—pure luck—which brought it about.

Poppleton tried gallantly to rise to the occasion. When parties came, he took pains to give them just what they wanted. And in order to be able to exchange remarks, and know who was who, he began to study the theatrical news in the papers.

He was deep in the *Daily Twaddler* on this particular morning, shortly after 11 a.m. An ambitious piece, *The Planter's Daughter*, had been produced the night before, and Mr. Bernard Clement Archer (the *Twaddler's* critic) had let himself out on it to the extent of a column and a half. Mr. B. C. A's conclusions were that the piece might succeed—if the public took to it; and that, anyhow, Mark Murdock's acting, in the part of Gomez, was the finest thing the stage had seen for half a generation.

"Must go to see Murdock," Poppleton murmured. "New name to me—don't think I've heard it before."

There was a slight commotion at the front. A gentleman had driven up in a dog-cart; being the first to arrive that morning, Poppleton hastened to the door.

"This way, sir. What would you like? Glass of sherry, sir—yes, sir."

Poppleton himself served the guest. The dog-cart was taken round to the stable-yard, and the horse, a chestnut, was attended to. The gentleman remarked that he would like some lunch—about half-past one.

Poppleton scrutinised him with interest. The gentleman had a slightly commanding manner, as if he felt conscious of being somebody. His smooth face and a certain mobility of expression suggested he might be an actor. He was new, however, to the Reindeer, and Poppleton speculated in vain as to his indentity.

"Here's a paper, sir, if you'd like to see it. Long account of *The Planter's Daughter*, at the St. Martin's. Piece seems hardly to have been a success."

Poppleton's tone was genial. There could be no doubt he intended to please. Nevertheless, the gentleman didn't seem quite to catch on.

"Oh, thanks. I've read it already."

He *was* an actor—must be. Poppleton wondered all the more what he might be called.

Coming back into the room after an absence, he found the gentleman—despite this surly response—deep in the critique in question. He was studying closely, intently; but on noticing Poppleton's return, threw the sheet aside with an impatient snort.

"I want a couple of miles walk somewhere," the guest remarked. "Can you recommend a pleasant round—quiet lanes or field-paths, for preference?"

"Oh, yes." Poppleton suggested a route. "That'll bring you back through the Beeches, on your way home."

"Beeches?" The gentleman seemed not to understand. "Ah, I remember. You have some fine trees here, haven't you?"

Poppleton felt hurt. That one should refer to the famous clump in that casual fashion! The speaker must be a foreigner, surely—no Englishman could be so ignorant.

He drank up his sherry, callously, ungraciously—and started out. There was something about him Poppleton didn't like. He seemed moody, oppressed, preoccupied—like one who waits his doom; waits, and has to wait, and can't avert it. The landlord ceased to feel quite so confident that the gentleman was a man of note.

Other guests came in, the next being a lady and gentleman; lady played Yoshi-san in "*Japan Up-to-Date*"; gentleman was a friend. Both were gay and chatty. Being kept busy welcoming arrivals, and attending to the wants of customers, Poppleton soon dropped all thought of the first comer.

A few minutes after twelve, however, he was called apart by P. C. Welch, who looked after the morals of Whittenham. Welch and Poppleton knew each other well, so there was no need for beating about the bush.

"I'm after a gentleman called Wilson," said the constable. "He started from London about ten o'clock, in a dog-cart, chestnut horse. Has he turned up here?"

"Wilson!" The worthy host knew no one of that name; but—well, it might be that stranger who came along first.

"Calls himself Wilson, I should say. His right name's Nosovich—he's a Russian. Wanted for a big job of embezzling money."

Russian—foreigner! Why, of course! That first arrival was the man.

"Come this way, has he?" queried Poppleton in a non-committal tone. "What's he like—have you a description?"

P. C. Welch repeated such particulars as he knew. Tall, dark, clean-shaven, muscular build. Whew! Every particular corresponded.

"Came in a dog-cart, I think you said?" Poppleton was almost convinced.

"Well, he started from London in a dog-cart. Chestnut horse, white stocking on off hind leg."

Chestnut, with white stocking! There was no further room for doubt. Poppleton, a judge of horses, a keen observer of equine peculiarities, had noticed this very circumstance.

"Right, constable; I've got him here. You've come to the right shop."

"He *is* here?"

Poppleton gave an affirmative jerk. "Dropped in about half-past eleven."

The situation was discussed at large. It was clear Wilson had no suspicion he was being followed. His lunch had been ordered for half-past one, by or before which time he might be expected back; and by or before that time, Inspector Barton would himself come on the scene. In the circumstances, Welch felt justified in adopting a policy of masterly inactivity.

They turned up almost together, Wilson and the Inspector, shortly after one. Poppleton performed his part by taking Wilson aside. "Party to see you, sir. This way, please." And having conducted Wilson to the chamber where Barton awaited him, mine host retreated to the dining-room.

Digitized by Google

There he found Miss Yoshi-san seated disconsolately alone.

"My friend has gone back to London," she pouted. "Called away on urgent business. Isn't it a shame?"

"And left you to return by yourself?"

"Oh, he's gone by train. His man is here, and will drive me back to town."

Curious occurrences never come singly. It was distinctly unusual to have a Scotland Yard Inspector on the premises; and it was equally out of the common for a gentleman who came to lunch at the Reindeer to be called away on business just before the meal was ready.

Inspector Barton, in the private room, didn't find it all plain sailing. The suspect showed surprise at being tackled, and burst into a decisive laugh:

"My name isn't Wilson—nor Nosovich either. You're on the wrong tack. I don't know how the mistake's arisen, but you're wrong."

Barton was prepared for a denial, and took it equably. He manœuvred so as to get between his captive and the door, and producing the photograph studied the man's features.

The result was satisfactory. Plus moustache—which altered the facial aspect—he felt sure the man before him would look just like the one in the photo.

"Oh, indeed! And what *do* you call yourself?"

The Inspector's tone was provoking, and the captive began to get angry. "I call myself Murdock—Mark Murdock. Perhaps you've heard of me?" He finished up quite sarcastically.

The sarcasm was lost on Barton, who was not theatrical. Irving he knew, and Toole—also Penley and Arthur Roberts; but Murdock. He shook his head.

"Can't say I have. No—I think I shall have to trouble you to return to town with me."

The suspect argued, expostulated, and threatened; but as he couldn't produce any conclusive evidence of his identity, the Inspector treated it all as bluff. Barton would make no further concession than that, as lunch had been ordered, it might be partaken of, before starting.

Meanwhile, a complication was brewing in a different quarter. The ostler had been quietly told that the chestnut with the white stocking on the off hind leg was under an embargo. He now came in to whisper to Poppleton that the gentleman's man-servant had arrived and wanted it prepared for going back.

Poppleton went down to the stable. The newcomer was Tovey, and he was unaware of the doings within the hotel. Poppleton sharply demanded on whose behalf he was acting.

"I belong to Mr. Wilson. He came down here with a lady. I'm to drive her back to town."

"Wilson! Why, why——"

"He's been called away, on urgent business. Lady's inside, having lunch."

Tovey was clear-headed enough, and told a straight tale. The landlord felt obfuscated, bewildered.

Chestnut horse, white stocking etc; the animal corresponded exactly with the police description. But—eh? what about the horse driven by that first arrival: by the man who was now in Inspector Barton's charge?

Poppleton turned sharply on the ostler. "Isn't this the horse that first gentleman brought? Where's that? Where've you put that?"

It was *not* the first arrival's property. The ostler pointed that out. It also was a chestnut, and it also had a white stocking—but on the *near* hind leg. Oh, oh! the two markings had been confused. Poppleton, by the way, had been engaged when the second comer drove up, and missed seeing his turn-out. It was news to him that the "gees" were so much alike.

A flash of insight lit up Poppleton's mind. The man wanted was the second who arrived—the one with Miss Yoshi-san. Horse and vehicle corresponded, and—yes, the face corresponded, too—yes, undoubtedly. He had picked up the lady on his way; her presence had shielded him from suspicion; and now he had flown.

Once started on this tack, Poppleton tumbled to the position without difficulty. That call on urgent business meant that Wilson had been warned. Why of course! The real criminal had got away, and the gentleman under detention was—somebody else.

Poppleton hastened to the dining-room, where he found the Inspector and his captive in close proximity. The latter was angrily disposing of lunch. Miss Yoshi-san, who sat opposite, seemed by her glances to recognise him.

"There's a mistake on," whispered Poppleton. "Just come over here."

Barton obeyed—warily; and the landlord led him to the side of the actress.

"Would you mind telling us who it was, you came with! We want to know particularly."

Yoshi-san gave a good-humoured laugh.

"Why, of course; he's Mr. Wilson."

The Inspector opened his eyes. "Of 13, Grafton Place, Piccadilly?"

"Yes, that's it."

Jerusalem! The mistake was evident.

"You've got the wrong chap, Inspector. Wilson is off—back to London, or somewhere."

Barton was promptly put in possession of the facts. Wilson had received a message; and his man now down in the stable-yard was apparently the person who'd brought it.

His man—Tovey! It was Tovey who'd warned him. Barton saw it all in a glimpse.

Who, then, was this gentleman he'd got. He took out the photograph again; the features didn't seem, now, quite to correspond.

Yoshi-san heard their whisperings, and volunteered a statement. "Don't you know him? I can tell you who he is."

"Can you? Who?"

"He's Mark Murdock, the actor. He made a great hit at the 'St. Martin's,' last night."

There was nothing more to be said. It was a case for backing out—and looking pleasant. Inspector Barton made profuse apologies, which Murdock accepted grimly; and the latter's detention came to an end.

Wilson, for the time, had got clear; and being warned, it might not be easy to capture him. Barton however, promptly addressed himself to the task; as a preliminary measure laying hands on the Russian's accomplice—the crafty, long-headed—Tovey. It was not, though, till some three weeks later that the principal culprit was laid by the heels.

Mr. Mark Murdock finished his lunch in peace, and good-naturedly endeavoured to restore Poppleton to an easy frame of mind. That he didn't bear malice or take his arrest to heart was shown by the fact of his offering to convoy Miss Yoshi-san back to "Babylon"; an offer she smilingly accepted.

RIVINGTON PYKE.

Digitized by Google

The Intervention of Pomp.

THE war in South Africa was over at last, and Philip Heaton was unfeignedly glad to see London again. Heaton's regiment, the — Hussars had acquitted themselves in a manner creditable to the traditions of the corps, and he himself had performed a conspicuous act of reckless bravery.

This latter had brought him his V.C. and something else as well, in the shape of a two months' sojourn in hospital, and afterwards a long convalescence.

He was still in the latter stage as, slowly and rather painfully, he strolled along one of the paths in the neighbourhood of Rotten Row. Presently the weariness increased, and, selecting a chair, he sat down with a sigh of relief and began to watch the gay crowds and whirling carriages thronging London's playground.

But the brilliant pageant failed to arouse any interest in Heaton's breast, and after a few moments of fruitless effort he closed his eyes and amused himself with self-analysation.

"I suppose I ought to feel grateful," he thought; "other men would. A company and the V.C. at twenty-six is something to be thankful for, but I'm not. I wonder—— It's that I suppose," he muttered rather wearily.

"I thought South Africa would have erased that episode from the slate, but it hasn't, quite. After all, was I in the wrong? I should have made allowances, been a bit gentler, perhaps. Women are never logical when they're excited, and I oughtn't to have flared up as I did; but it's all over now, and regret is of no consequence—no consequence whatever—except—to me."

Heaton restlessly shifted his position and lit a cigarette. He sought once more to interest himself in the people around him, but the result was merely wasted energy—no effort could claim his thoughts to immediate objects; they invariably and irresistibly went back to other scenes and other days, now almost a year old.

Those other scenes were always bright, lovingly idealised by the touch of memory and tinged with vague regret. He had lived every hour over many times as he lay on the veldt at night, with the stars above, and death in the shape of Boer rifles lurking in the darkness around him.

And afterwards, when the shadow had come up close to him and he lay in hospital, bruised and broken, with all the life and energy well-nigh crushed out of him, the same days, and the same scenes, and the same woman mingled with the phantom shadows flitting across an imagination quickened with the heat of delirium.

And now, as he sat in a corner of Hyde Park, with the soft June breeze ruffling the longish hair, picked out with grey near the temples, and the drowsy hum of the city mellowed by distance, lulling the bodily weakness, one particular scene stood out with a vividness mentally painful.

The scene that suggested itself was not a pleasant one for Heaton's contemplation—the surroundings that witness the rupture of a man's happiness are rarely attractive, afterwards; but the man's strength of will, weakened by physical illness, could not repress the picture so persistently forcing itself before him.

It was a large room, but warm and cosy, and its details evinced the hand and refined taste of a lady. A big, brown spaniel lay stretched on a rug in front of the fire, sleeping comfortably.

The woman, whose face had haunted Heaton during those long hours of physical anguish in the hospital, stood erect and haughty, in the centre of the room, her eyes suffused with haughty pride and anger. He himself stood equally erect, the passion within him finding vent in his set teeth, and the convulsive grip on the handle of the door.

That was the picture that impressed itself, with photographic distinctness, on Heaton's brain as he wearily reclined on the uncomfortable Park chair, four months after he had won the Victoria Cross.

The picture was not an original one—many hands had painted it, many times before, and the story had been

Digitized by Google

worn threadbare by repetition; but still it will be told and retold as long as the earth with its sin and virtue moves in space, and love and distrust sway the hearts of men and women.

Some fancied slight on the man's part, followed by amazed repudiation on that of the woman. Angry insistence, answered with haughty vituperation, mutual pride—and the story is finished!

Sometimes the broken threads are joined together again and merge in a single end, but now and then, what the claws of pride have rent asunder gets wound on the spool of Fate in ways divergent.

And pride had entered strongly into Heaton's romance—the unbending mutual pride of two finely-tempered natures.

For each, convinced of the other's error, looked longingly, though unyieldingly, for mutual concession, but the concession never came, and shortly after the quarrel Heaton had sailed for South Africa.

Such was the outline of the story Heaton sat reviewing, with half-closed eyes, from the vantage of a Hyde Park chair.

"Glenville said there was talk of an engagement," he muttered, absently, "between her and Mason of the Blues. I cut him out once," smiling bitterly, "but he's having his innings now, and she—well, she has forgotten the episode of twelve months ago, pretty quickly. It's the way women——"

Suddenly Heaton was summarily interrupted in the middle of his cogitations by a joyous bark, and something with big, brown dusty paws jumped against him in a transport of delighted recognition.

"Why, Pomp, old chap," exclaimed Heaton, as he at length succeeded in identifying the pirouetting mixed-up mass of canine limbs and silky brown hair. The dog stayed his contortions for a moment as Heaton spoke, then resting his forepaws on the latter's knees, gazed into his face with big soft eyes and wide-open mouth.

"Thank you, old boy," said Heaton, patting the dog's head, "you have given me the very warmest and most spontaneous welcome home I have had yet. A year's absence hasn't weakened your memory, has it? Think of it, old dog, it's exactly a year since that day when you lay on the hearthrug, snoring beatifically, and I—I——"

Suddenly the dog barked, and then wagged his tail vigorously, as a lady approached.

Heaton glanced up to discover the dog's disquietude and a faint flush showed behind his pale skin, as he recognised the woman with whom he had quarrelled twelve months before.

She had been advancing rapidly, inwardly wondering at the dog's unusual partiality for strangers, but involuntarily stopped as their glances met.

For one moment a strange softness swept round the rather hard corners of her mouth, and her face whitened slightly, but, with an effort, she threw her head back and continued on her way haughtily.

"Pomp!" she cried, "come along, this instant, sir! You must not intrude on—strangers."

Heaton had meanwhile bent his head slightly, and his mouth contracted a little at the word "stranger"; then a strange keen realisation of his physical debility came home to him with the rush of a sudden revelation, and the attenuated fingers that stroked the glossy head of the dog grew slightly cold.

"You must get along, old chap," he said gently, putting the dog down from his knee; "your mistress says you're not to intrude on——strangers."

But Pomp had no intention of obeying the mandate; his deposition from Heaton's knees was suffered in meekness, but the accompanying order carried no weight evidently, as he lay down on the gravel imperturably, and gazed up at Heaton with lazy indifference.

Presently his mistress, who had meanwhile walked on some considerable distance, noticed his continued absence, and wheeled round in deep annoyance.

"Pomp! Pomp!" she called out angrily.

The cause of her wrath lazily glanced round the leg of Heaton's trousers at his chagrined mistress, then aggravatingly wagged his tail twice, and glanced up at Heaton as if to seek commendation of his disobedience; and, miserable as the latter felt, he could not restrain a faint smile at the whimsical gravity of the dog.

"Now, really, old chap," he said, trying to lift the fat, sleek body of the rebellious spaniel from the ground, "you must go. Glad as I am to see you, I don't wish to make your mistress hate me more than she does already, by compounding your disobedience; so run off, old man."

Pomp suffered himself to be lifted, but on regaining his legs, evinced no disposition to move, but glanced alternately from the distant figure of his mistress to the face of the man beside him, as if in amazed wonderment at the unusual amount of space separating the objects of his interest.

Presently the angry incisive tones of his mistress were repeated. "Pomp! Pomp! come along this instant, sir!"

"Off you go," said Heaton, determinedly, as he gently pushed the spaniel away from him, with the point of his stick. The latter looked at him reproachfully, but refused to budge, and Heaton began to feel himself in rather an uncomfortable if not slightly ridiculous position.

Again the angry voice of the lady came towards him, but the only response evoked was a complacent wag of the tail; otherwise the object of her solicitude remained impassive.

Meanwhile Heaton was alternately flushing and paling with annoyance. Probably she would think he sought to detain the dog out of childish spite for the purpose of placing her in a ridiculously awkward position. The thought was not pleasant, and he twisted in his chair uncomfortably, but the troublesome thought refused to evaporate, and at length Heaton in exasperation rose, and shortly calling to the dog, walked towardsthe lady.

An expression of surprise, followed by a slight flush of anger, flitted across her features for a moment, as she saw him rise from his chair, and come towards her, then the anger fled before some other feeling, strangely soft

Digitized by Google

and tender, as she observed the almost pathetic slowness of his movements.

"I beg your pardon," he said, raising his hat, "for appearing to force myself on you, but the dog wouldn't leave me, so I thought it would save you some annoyance if I brought him to you."

"Thank you," she said, "he is very disobedient to-day, he doesn't usually——"

"Intrude on strangers," supplemented Heaton with a bitter smile.

"I am sorry I said that, now," she corrected quietly, "it was despicable of me to have ever made such a remark. You have been very ill, I he—I read all about your heroism in the papers, and I am truly sorry for hurting you gratuitously. Won't you believe me?" she continued almost wistfully, "when I repeat that I am thoroughly ashamed, and very deeply grieved for having hurt you so?"

"Yes," said Heaton gently, "I do believe you."

He did not look up as he made the remark but remained with his eyes fixed on the holes in the gravel, which his stick was engaged in manufacturing.

"You have not quite recovered yet," she continued, after a surreptitious glance at Heaton's rather grey looking face.

"No," he answered, raising his eyes to hers, "on some days I imagine I am nearly well, on others the uncomfortable demon of pessimism tries to persuade me that I shall never be quite right again. But, on the whole, I can safely say I feel better, much better, than I did six months ago."

"Six months ago," she repeated slowly, "if my memory serves me correctly, your life was being despaired of, so your answer is equivalent to a negative; you—why, what is the matter?" she broke off suddenly, as Heaton leaned heavily on his stick, and covered his face with the palm of his hand for a moment.

When he removed it, she thought his eyes looked almost black amidst the ashy whiteness of his face.

"Oh! it's nothing, really," he answered, with a ghostly smile of deprecation, "it's awfully stupid, but I got up from that seat rather suddenly, and the doctors, you see, have been counselling moderation in speed and method in movement and one cannot with impunity, smash their counsels—I am sorry I——"

"Please don't," she interrupted quickly, "take this instead," and she handed him a tiny bottle of smelling salts.

Heaton accepted the restorative gratefully.

"Would you mind my sitting down for a moment on one of these chairs?" he said, "I get tired very easily," he added apologetically.

"Of course not," she said anxiously, "please don't mention foolish scruples in a case like this, it is ridiculous. Are you better now?" she inquired anxiously as they sat down with the redoubtable Pomp occupying the intervening space between the two chairs.

"Yes, I'm all right now, thank you," said Heaton gratefully, as he turned towards her. "You are very good to me," he continued, "after what I——Will you forgive me," he broke off, "if I speak to you about the—about twelve months ago? It cannot matter much now, of course, but I should like you to know that I have been punished for my distrust and obstinate pig-headedness by one deep unavailing regret. As I lay in the hospital, staring up all day long at the whitewashed ceiling, the pride and obstinacy all died out of me, and only the pain for any trouble and annoyance I caused you, remained. I don't quite know why I speak to you as I am doing," he went on apologetically, "only when one is very weak one is apt to become garrulous, and if by any chance I should never get quite right again, I want you to know that no one could wish you more happiness than I do, in your new life——"

"My new life," she repeated amazedly, "what do you mean?"

"Your engagement to——"

"Engagement! I don't quite understand!"

"Aren't you going to marry Mason? I heard——"

"No," she said quietly but decisively, "at present I have no intention of marrying Mr. Mason. I shall never——"

Her voice wavered slightly, as she broke off in the middle of the sentence and stooping over the dog commenced to stroke his big brown head.

Heaton's eyes were rivetted on her hat and a tumultuous sense of gladness surged through him. With a flush on his face he stooped and laid his hand on the dog's head also. The latter accepted the attention complacently.

Presently the girl looked up as Heaton's fingers closed round hers, and the eyes which met his glance were suffused with tears.

"Vera," he said gently, "shall we go back to where we left off, twelve months ago?"

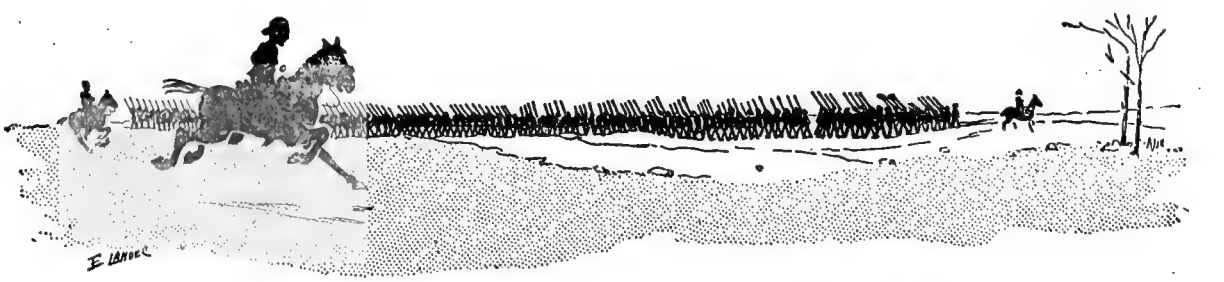
"Yes," she whispered, "we will go back!"

After a few moments of such silence as only comes from utter content, the girl with an impulsive movement stooped down and kissed the dog's head.

"You darling!" she cried. "We owe all our happiness to you!"

"Yes," said Heaton with a long breath, "neither of us will ever forget 'The Intervention of Pomp.'"

Nolan of Castleknock.



Digitized by Google

The Poet's Awakening.

YES, I will see him.

The editor rose from his desk, glancing at the card in his hand with a pleasant smile of anticipation. A moment later he made a step forward with outstretched hand as his visitor entered.

"Are you Mr. Sparling?" he asked, a shade, half surprise, half doubt, making itself apparent in voice and look.

"Yes, but, out it's Mr. Vernon, the editor, I want to see."

"I am Mr. Vernon, and very pleased to make your acquaintance, Mr. Sparling. I count you as the most interesting of all my contributors. Pray sit down; though a busy man I can spare a quarter of an hour for so famous a personage as you are becoming."

Mr. Sparling sat down as commanded but remained silent. He felt very shy and to add to his confusion this man to whom he had decided to make a confidential communication was not elderly as he had imagined, but in appearance little older than himself. Could this be the editor of the *Leicester Magazine*, the success of the day, one of the best edited and cleverest of all the periodicals under which Smith's bookstalls groaned? However, his manner was friendly and kind.

"I feel very proud," the editor was saying, "at having discovered you. When your biography is published many years hence the fact that your first verses appeared in my magazine will be recorded."

"Indeed," stammered the poet, "I am very grateful to you. I could hardly believe my eyes when you acknowledged my first poem, and when I saw it in print."

"Good work," said the editor a trifle dogmatically, "finds its market sooner or later. The present age is critical but broad-minded. Of course the stock saying that literature is an overcrowded profession is true; on the other hand a man of talents finds his opening earlier now than in any other time. There are men who wail that they are neglected geniuses, I read their manuscripts every day—and I sincerely hope that they will remain neglected. Ever since I started the *Leicester* I have been looking for a new poet; not a mere manufacturer of verses, but a poet. Your first contribution pleased me immensely, it had the true touch of genius. It has been very gratifying, too, to find my own opinion endorsed by other editors. Never have poems been so extensively annexed. Why every evening paper copies them!"

Underlying the editor's compliments was a vague unexpressed doubt whether the young man sitting awkwardly on the edge of a chair, a nervous smile on his commonplace face, could in reality be the author of the exquisite verses which, under the initials H. S., had created so much stir in the literary world. They struck a note poets are prone to harp on, the awakening of love. But though the theme was hackneyed, the expression was fresh; this fine gift of song moved the most careless and cynical, so infinitely tender yet deep-seeing was the bard. Certainly H. S. was no slavish imitator of the great poets of the past. No wonder the editor was proud of having published such verses. But could this man have written them?

He was a shy looking man of about four and twenty, with dark hair and small pale features. The face was freckled, the nose ill shaped, the whole expression and appearance homely. Nor did his dress improve him. A painfully new tweed suit clung awkwardly about his figure, his tie was tawdry, his boots clumsy, he evidently came fresh from the barbers, a smell of pomade enveloping him. He looked like a provincial clerk unaccustomed to society.

And this, the editor learnt with astonishment, was the case. Only a post office clerk in Yarmouth, whose aunt and guardian let lodgings!

"And when did you begin writing poetry?"

The visitor flushed painfully. "I was coming to that," he said, and paused a moment, then gaining courage from the other's manner, pursued somewhat shamefacedly:

"I've never told anyone the story and I'm afraid you'll only laugh, but I want to ask your advice. The

Digitized by Google

fact is I want to find a certain lady living in London, and I don't know how to begin."

"There are, I should say, over two million ladies in London," said the editor. "But let me hear, perhaps I can aid you."

"I'm a shy man," confessed the poet, "and I've practically no friends. I don't play cricket or football, and my only amusement is reading. I was especially fond of reading poetry, Tennyson, Longfellow, Shelley, Swinburne—I've read nearly all the poets but till last August I never tried to write a line.

"It was one evening last August, that I was inspired to write, the evening when I first met her; from that day I began a new life. I had gone for a bicycle ride, but it was so dusty and crowded on the road that at Caistor I turned off and wheeled my machine along a footpath through a field leading to the sea. I lay down. facing it on one of the sand-hills that fringe the shore. The waves were breaking very softly on the sandy beach, I could hear the twitter of birds among the belt of trees in the fields behind, and I lay enjoying it all, feeling tired and half drowsy, when a soft voice addressed me. I looked and for the moment thought I was dreaming, never had I seen so beautiful a creature as the woman who stood beside me gazing down with dark blue inquiring eyes. I stared, silent, tongue-tied.

"'Won't you answer me?' she said smiling, and then I began to stammer an apology and explain I had not heard what she said.

"'I want to get on the Yarmouth Road. I have lost my friends and the way!' she replied smiling divinely.

"'It is close by,' I answered, 'if you will allow me I will show you.'

"We walked along the footpath together, I wheeling her machine, and when we reached the gate, the road was plainly visible. She stopped me there, said she would trouble me no further, and with a bow of farewell mounted and rode swiftly off. In another two minutes she had rounded the corner and passed out of sight. I saw her vanish from my eyes five minutes after she had first appeared, but her memory has been with me ever since. Yet as I rode home later, I could remember hardly anything of what she had said as we walked, except that she was a Londoner, while I had been too shy and stupid to say anything.

"My brain was in a whirl; as I thought of her, half-unconsciously words, verses, came into my head. Late that night I sat down and wrote the poem I first sent you. Next morning when I read it I thought it good and could hardly believe I had written it, so I sent it to the *Leicester*.

"And that is how all my poems have been written; thinking of her, dreaming of her, worshipping her memory, the verses came, poems fit to express my love and adoration."

"Surely," thought Vernon, "the man is speaking the truth, he does not appear to have enough imagination to invent the story."

"Hitherto I have been content with only the memory, but that no longer satisfies," continued the love-lorn young man. "An infinite craving to see her again if only for a moment overwhelms me, and so now I've got my fortnight's holiday,"—"oh, bathos," murmured the editor—"I've come to London to seek her."

"To seek her? But have you no clue to her identity, nothing to guide your search?"

"Absolutely none."

"Then your search is hopeless; if you are ignorant of name, address——"

"Who is considered the most beautiful woman in London?" interrupted the poet.

"Good Heavens, how can I answer that question? Their name is legion. Stay, I can give you one practical piece of advice—look at the photographs in the shop windows."

"I will walk London," said the poet doggedly, "till I find her!"

The editor rose to intimate that the interview was at an end.

"Come and see me again when I not so busy. Have you nothing fresh for me?"

"Yes, I have just finished a new poem."

"I should like to see it, bring it yourself, come to-morrow, no, Thursday is a quiet day, come on Thursday, and we'll have another chat. Perhaps the mysterious goddess will be found."

"Ah, if I could only find her."

"Would you be happier?" said the editor. "Perhaps—perhaps the goddess has feet of clay."

"What did he mean?" mused the poet as he paced the Strand, and being at that moment only Herbert Sparling, a common-place and rather stupid young man, he did not understand. Neither did he fully realise the wonderful gift he possessed. For we all of us when young and growing into manhood at times have great thoughts. Transcendental ideas float nebulous in our brains; we seem lifted above ourselves. And sometimes when this mood is upon us, we fly to paper seeking relief by the flow of words with which we endeavour to clothe our great thought, the original piece of philosophy, the verse with its noble ring; alas, when morning comes, how often we find dross instead of gold. Where is the gold minted from our brain, the glass of sparkling champagne creaming and bubbling? Gone: the coin rings flat, it is only brass, and a bad imitation, too; the champagne is ginger beer, flat as ditch-water. But occasionally it is otherwise, and Herbert Sparling was one of the exceptions.

The poet's love was a thing apart, a secret jealously hid, and now that he was in London the fascination the great city has for provincials half swamped his dream of the fair unknown goddess for whom he was searching. As he walked he looked for her, but the interesting and novel sights that met his eyes could not be entirely banished.

He obeyed the editor's hint to look at the photographs in shop windows. There he saw pretty faces, mostly of theatrical stars. One of these young ladies was not unlike the beautiful unknown; she was dressed in a short frock, and coquettishly surveyed the world under a big straw hat, with a somewhat forced smile. There seemed profanation in the resemblance, and the poet turned away.

About six he entered a shop for tea, late dinners being unfamiliar to him; he ate and drank feeling tired and depressed. He was in the same city with his goddess, but she seemed further away than when he wandered on the beach at Yarmouth. Surely his search would be useless, yet an inward voice stronger than he bade him continue; to lose heart the first day was absurd.

As he was about to rise, a newcomer who had just taken the vacant chair opposite to him exclaimed: "Why, it's Mr. Sparling," and the poet recognised a man who had lodged the previous summer at his aunt's house, a clerk of the name of Catley.

"How's the old lady?" said Catley genially. "I haven't forgotten her, or her light dumplings and gravy.

Digitized by Google

I daresay I shall come to Yarmouth again, when I get my holidays. What are you doing here? Having your holidays, are you? On the loose, eh? Oh! I know you provincial chaps who go to church or chapel regular on Sundays and look as if butter wouldn't melt in your mouths. I know what you're up to in London when you're sight-seeing."

He emphasised his remarks with a wink and dig at Herbert's ribs.

"Look here, are you going anywhere this evening? I've got two seats for the Palatial, fauteuils, too. Dicky Embleton, the great serio-comic, gave them to me; he lives my way, and, I may say, we're pals."

Herbert was obliged to confess that he had no engagement, and, as Mr. Catley was incapable of realising anyone preferring solitude to his society, the matter was settled. Mr. Catley proceeded to eat his tea, entertaining his provincial friend with an account of a ripping fine girl whose acquaintance he had lately made, and various anecdotes concerning the great Dicky Embleton.

"I've seen him get outside ten whiskies and soda without getting squiffy. There's an 'ead for you!

"I say," proceeded Mr. Catley, "how's the pretty girl who's so mashed on you down at Yarmouth?"

"Who do you mean?" asked Herbert, trying to assert some dignity.

"Why, you know who I mean, Miss Clara Ellis. Was always coming to see your aunt. That girl's a catch, too; I should say her father's a warm man. That shop of his must be worth a pretty penny. Have you popped the question?"

"I am not engaged to Miss Ellis," said Herbert stiffly, "if that is what you mean. We are very good friends, have been all our lives, nothing more."

"Well, you are a fool," said Mr. Catley frankly. "Why, I'd marry her like a shot myself. I did try a bit of a mash but it was no good. She was so gone on you. And she an only child, the old man has got nobody else to leave it to. You don't know your luck; come along, let's be off."

The poet meekly allowed himself to be alternately chaffed and patronised and presently found himself in the red plush seats of the Palatial, while Catley told him in a loud whisper the private history of each of the artistes.

A long and dreary ballet came later and the house began to fill.

"Dolly Dorrington's next," said Catley, "she'll sing, 'Ducky, ducky.' She'd make a cat laugh, she does go near the knuckle. I reckon there'll be a row about her songs when the licences are applied for. They say the diamonds she wears are worth four thou. Lord Sherrington gave them to her, he's spent eight thou. over her this year."

A burst of music from the orchestra announced the inimitable Dolly, "exclusively engaged." Herbert raised his eyes from the programme and looked at her. His face went white, and a blank sense of horror filled him. Then as he stared, a sigh of relief broke from his lips; for the moment so close was the resemblance that he had taken the singer for the unknown goddess, but he now recognised one distinctive feature which showed him he was mistaken.

"Isn't she ripping?" whispered Catley, "and she's as fetching off the stage as on. I remember seeing her down at Yarmouth last August on the pier."

"I think you are mistaken," said Herbert; "there was a lady, I know, at Yarmouth last August very much like her, for I saw her once, but she had lovely yellow hair and this Miss Dorrington has red."

"Bless you, it was the same, I know I'm not mistaken. Dolly moves with the fashions; yellow hair was all the go last year. Now listen."

Herbert sat silent and stunned, his brain too numb to realise the full extent of his discovery. But as the song went on it came to him with pitiless force like drops of water falling from a height, each drop increasing the torture. He winced in agony as the broad innuendoes and equivocal jokes of the singer came on his ears. He felt as though he could not sit and endure it any longer, it must be a mistake; an extraordinary resemblance must have deceived Catley as well as himself, he must see her nearer so as to be certain. Unobserved by his companion, he slipped out quietly and sought the stage door.

He had not long to wait; presently the door opened and Miss Dorrington emerged, escorted by a young man in evening dress who led her to a flashey looking brougham which stood by. A liveried lad opened the door. "Home, my lord?" he queried. The young man nodded and handed the lady in. Herbert was so close he could have touched her, his eyes were riveted on her face, there was no longer any mistake, his goddess was found but she was of earth, earthy. The carriage rolled away and left him standing forlorn and miserable.

Herbert walked straight back to his lodgings; the electric light dazzled his eyes, and the busy crowded streets jarred and irritated his nerves; he wanted to be alone, to think. He sat motionless for hours on his bed that night staring before him with glassy eyes. Dawn was breaking before he roused himself and going to his portmanteau took out some sheets of paper. Folding them in squills he held them to the gas jet till there was nothing left but a little heap of ashes.

Next Thursday as the editor went home he remembered the poet had not called. He did not know his contributor's London address, but when a fortnight had gone by without his seeing or hearing from him he wrote to Yarmouth. To this letter he received no reply, nor to another he wrote subsequently. Presently in the bustle of a busy life the poet faded from his memory. Poetry is not essential, a magazine can get on very well without it, yet occasionally he wondered why the poems had ceased so suddenly.

It was three months later that Mrs. Taylor, the evening before her nephew's wedding day, said in a tone of conscious pride:

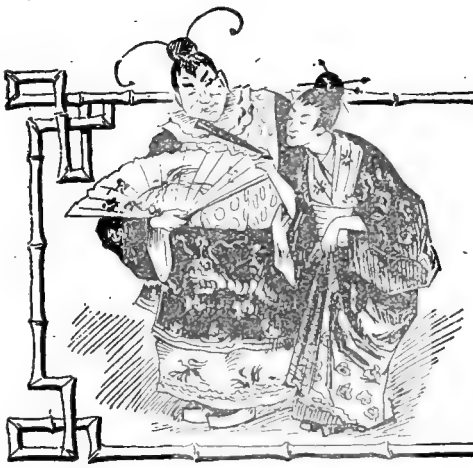
"Well, 'Erbert, all I can say is you're a very lucky man. The Sparlings 'as always kept themselves respectable, but you're the first as has ever taken a thirty-two pound semi-detached villa, rates and taxes extra, electric light laid on, with a bath-room with 'ot and cold water, and a greenhouse as well. And to marry a girl like Clara, who's quite the lady, who's 'ad lessons in singing from the sister of a barronite, and can talk French! I must say Mr. Ellis has brought her up proper, never let her look in the shop, much less serve there. And the fine furniture he's bought and furnished your house from top to bottom with. Well, you ought to be 'appy, though I can't say as you're so cheerful as you used to be when you were always scribbling, but you seem to have dropped that lately."

"Yes," answered Herbert, "I've dropped that."

He never wrote another line.

GUY CADOGAN ROTHERY.
CHARLES D. LESLIE.

Digitized by Google



LOVE IN NIPPON.

It was a curious gathering. Looking over the deep, serene Sumida with its palace-boats, whence arose the quaint strains of *samisen*, now heaving and now mellowing on the waves of its eventide; looking across to the dreamy banks of Mukojima, with their ten miles of the cherry groves, now ablaze in the setting sun of an early spring, the uncertain shapes of home-bound epicureans moving slowly; here, on Hashiba side, in a lordly hall of Hosokawa mansion, there were assembled in a strange concourse some ten or twelve Englishmen and Americans and a few other Europeans, with a goodly number of the Japanese themselves sprinkled among them. It is not for me to tell how this meeting came about; I only happen to know that its object was to listen to the tale of love of many a different land.

The last speaker sat down. The storm of applause raged and subsided. The chairman called on the next, and great was the enthusiasm that followed. In its midst arose Mr. Okada Gemba, a stalwart man of fifty years, full of military airs. One would have expected anything but a gentle voice of sweet passion from a man of his type; yet you could easily trace out a forehead of beautiful shape and a mouth of ideal cut, which told of a handsome face of the early days, now buried under the grey. Let us listen:

"I rise with a nameless feeling. After having listened to the excellent stories of the preceding gentlemen, also well told, what could you expect from me? Yet I am here to-night to represent our beloved Japan. Japan shall not be outdone. No, not even in the matter of love. I will proceed:

"Thirty-five years ago I was a young man of twenty, a winsome youth. But how many of you here know the Japan of those days of three decades and five springs ago? The two centuries of peace and plenty perfected the splendour of Tokugawa dynasty, alas! at the expense of the honest and the hard-working. Outside the very walls of polish and luxury the atmosphere was thick with buzzing noises, as of bees, ready for a new life; new action and restlessness and venturesomeness became the spirit of the day among the quick. Nor was I an exception. At twenty I left the home, and went about *a-mushashigio* (wandering about for the championship of the martial arts). Ah! the word itself has become a relic of the past feudalism now: but in those days there was a glory of manhood in its very sound.

"I journeyed south. In Nagasaki I became acquainted with an Englishman, a survivor of a wreck. From him I acquired a little English and some knowledge of the West. It was like a peep into the grandeur of a forbidden land; and a forbidden land it was for us at the time, that home of a modern civilization. My spirit took a new turn then, and went a little ahead of the reckoning of the period. My friends, however, warned me in time that I was being suspected of high-sounding crimes, such as desertion, treason, etc., so I hurried to North and went wandering through the domains of the different *daimias* of those regions, whiling away the days of an unwilling exile.

* * * * *

"Five years elapsed; and one day I walked past the little town of Yaita and came under a bower of a cherry-tree, which outspread its branches over the road, growing itself within the row of a long winding hedge-fence encircling a large villa. The time was spring. The queen blossoms were in their glory. I looked up and saw the sister trees rivalling their magnificence over the whole length of the villa, but the one I stood under was the queen of queens. In a momentary dream of happiness I mused out:

"U-tsu-ku-shi-na
I-ma-o sa-ka-ri-ni
Sa-ku-ra-ba-na
No-chio-no Shi-ru-shi-ni
Ta-wo-ri-te-va u-kan."

"(How grand in thy glory: O blossoming cherry: That the like be mine, will I thy branch pluck now.) I reached up my hand, and was about to break the nearest one, when I heard a noise of someone else tearing down a branch within.

"A sweet voice then said: 'Your pardon,' and a hand, beauteous as pearl, held out to me a pink-clustered bough through a crevice in the hedge growth. And lo! in the little opening I beheld a face as of a flower. I heard my own blood coursing in my veins. I stretched out my hand, received the gift, and said an awkward thanks, half-apologetically. I saw a faint streak of crimson mount the face, but only for a moment; it disappeared behind where the growth was the thickest, an uncertain figure gliding away out of my sight. For the first time in my life I, leaning eagerly forward against the hedge, found myself

Digitized by Google

trying to catch a glimpse of a woman. I was spell-bound, I forgot myself.

"I leaned there all absorbed, till a hand suddenly jerked me by the shoulder, and a gruff voice said:

"'A gentleman or a thief?'

"Turning round quickly, and taking up a position of defence, I said in my consternation:

"'Thy words of impertinence! I am a gentleman; what of that?' and I faced a group of five *samurai* smiling a smile of derision.

"The words had scarcely left my lips when one of them ejaculated:

"'Noble gentleman! we are glad to make your acquaintance,' and his well-spread palm came flashing over my cheek. But it lodged itself only in my firm grasp, which pulled my innocent saluter a little toward myself, and with a twist of my body I gave him a twist and threw him in the air—a respectable toss! Ah! you smile, my good audience; you do not believe me? Yet only thirty years ago a feat like this was a mere commonplace. Ah me! how old have I grown these days.

"The tossed man picked himself deftly up, and with his comrades withdrew. I did not, but stood glaring defiance at them with my hand on the hilt of my sword. Passers-by and curious on lookers from the vicinity gathered round us in a goodly crowd. A breathless silence sealed their mouths, and they kept a safe distance watching our next move. The odds were against me, most plainly, but my calm, collected manner seemed to have awakened an awe in my assailants, so that each was anxious to have the other start the first blow.

"Irritated at their cowardice, I relaxed my guard. Down came a sword descending over me—only to hit the air.

"For mine left its scabbard at the same moment, and striking him on the back felled my enemy to the ground. At this the other four jumped upon me. I was now in great danger, when there came rushing towards us two men from opposite directions. One of them exclaimed:

"'Cowards! away with your arms!'

"My foes dodged sulkily a few steps backward, which I let them do without pressing on them, as the fight was after all an unwilling one on my part. Then the other of the new-comers called out to me:

"'Honoured stranger, pray calm your anger, even for the sake of the flowers you stand under.'

"A sweet fancy! My heart softened, and I, too, put away my weapon, at which the first man stepped forward and with an unexpected politeness addressed me:

"'Ha! all health to you, Mr. Okada. If I am not mistaken, you are the son of my honoured master!'

"I recognised in the man Nejiro Yokone, who at the time I left my father, was one of his principal pupils in the time-honoured art of fencing. It foreboded ill that he should salute me thus with open hands.

"Some time before this I heard a rumour that the same Nejiro was expelled from my father's for a certain offence not to be mentioned here, and there was no reason whatever that he should bear me good-will. But there he was, with bows, smiles, and exclamations, the very picture of friendliness. I accepted them all with good grace. He even apologised to me on behalf of the bullies who so unwarrantably attacked me; he said he was keeping a fencing-school of his own in Yaita, and that they were his green pupils. He also introduced me to the man who bade me peace.

"The gentleman's name was Mr. Hori, and he it was who owned the cherry-bowered villa. Mr. Hori proposed that we should all adjourn to a feast, explaining to me at the same time that that day he had invited Nejiro and his pupils with some of the townspeople to a party in honour of his villa's spring, and that I should be welcome above others as an old friend of Professor Yokone's. Professor Yokone, too, added a word of persuasion; so I followed suit, and walked into Mr. Hori's.

I was now in great danger, when there came rushing towards us two men.

Digitized by Google

"From the *genka* (entrance) through the hallway to the guests' room, glitter and lustre there were none to force upon the vulgar the idolatry of wealth; but in the midst of the subdued quietness of colours and ornaments there issued a gentle fragrance of unstained woodwork, and it was delightful to tread on the pale green matting of fresh *tatami*. The silken *kakemono*, or paintings, that hung gracefully in a fantastic niche of *tokonoma*, the dwarf pines and cut twigs which so picturesquely stood in pots and vases of exquisite makes, the spacious garden that opened in front like a painted scenery with its pond, rocks, and bowering trees; all bespoke superior taste and culture in the host.

"Upon these, however, I shall not dwell, but the beautiful panorama hangs before me now! I see the little sunken-eyed Yokone, bulging himself out superbly at the head of a motley row of the rustic guests. I see the *karakami* door behind the host slide gently open. I see a lady, the graceful wife of our host, enter the room, followed timidly by her daughter. My heart quickens—it throbs! Lo! she is the same—that fair daughter of mine host—she is the one who played coquette to me behind the fence!

"Ah! I imagine the undying fragrance of that love-inspiring branch, still lingering about me! How like the flower of flowers she sits there, haunting vision! There were there plump lasses of bonnie faces, but how each eye turned on Miyo, for such was her name. There are warring within me the passions of jealousy and even anger, the twin servants of awakened love, as Nejiro Yokone greeted her with words of familiarity—though they were merest comments on the weather! Yet, ah! I felt dizzy when Miyo bowed me a mumbling bow of acquaintance at the parental words of introduction.

"We all sat there now ready for the feast, but it did not come yet. Mr. Hori had a batch of *tanzaku* cards distributed among us, and demanded of us an *ikku*, a verse, or line of poetical sentiment on his cherries, now in their resplendent bloom. A delightful conceit! But what a cast of smiling despair over the honest country faces! Our host led in scribbling down the thirty one syllables, followed by his wife. Miyo was the next to take up the pen-brush, and then Taro, her youngest brother. Taro was the exact counterpart of his sister in looks, a handsome youth of sixteen! After him I came up in the race, and the worthy professor closed the suit. The rest, one and all, laughed a faint laughter of innocent shame, bowed and scratched their heads, and prayed us to read forth our productions.

"The all-important man, as he sat there, my friend Nejiro Yokone, was asked to read his first. He did, and no one ever heard a worse hackwork of plagiarism; I pitied the poor fellow; but when it was my turn, ha! I had to muster all my courage. Strange power—Love! Only an hour ago I defied death in the midst of flashing swords. But now a glance, a smile, a word, and I sat on a rack of judgment—almost trembling! But in those days, thirty years ago, *Samurai* was ashamed to know himself to be in love. I steadied myself, nevertheless, and calmly sang out:

"'Ka-ba-ka-ri-ni
A-wa-re-to Koso-wa
O-mo-ho-u-re
Ha-na-no Ko-ko-ro-zo
I-ka-ni A-ru-ru-um?

("While thus and so I love thee, O beauteous flower, I wonder where thy thoughts be?)

"The flower told me they were on me, about me, but that was years afterwards. The *chokus* of warmed *sake* now went their rounds. *Tai*-soup; boiled *hirame*; sliced *katsu-o-ya*; mother-of-pearl in vinegar; pigeons and snipes cut in bits, and roasted whole; but away with the inventory. The time flew fast and the sun was now low. The blossoming cherries glowed and reddened in its departing rays.

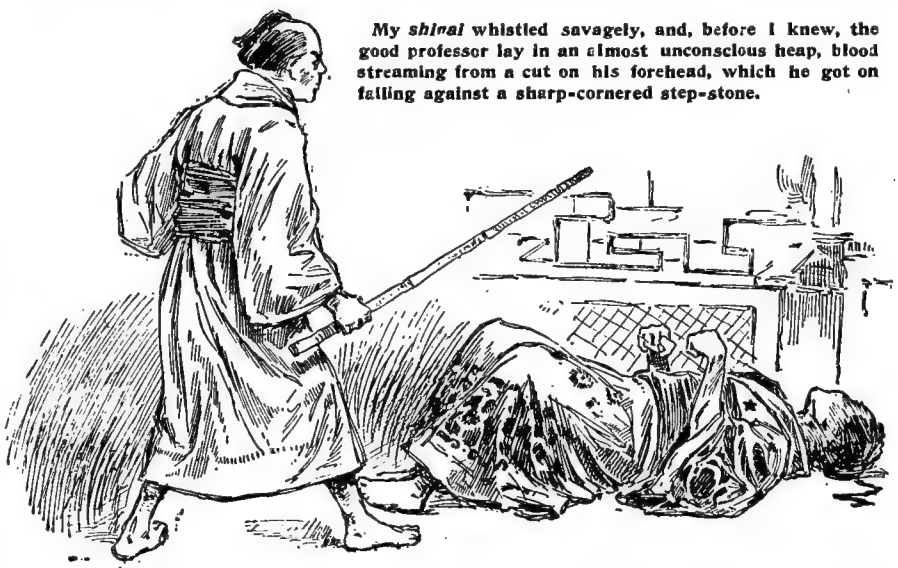
"We were in the height of our rustic revelry when Yokone took us by surprise by coolly saying:

"'I admit that poesy is a form of pleasure, but it is for those of older age and gentler sex; we have gratified them both. But we *samurai* glory in the martial arts; let us now have our turn.'

"And he challenged me to a fencing bout. I refused—refused till common sense and modesty were alike exhausted.

"We alighted on the ground, Nejiro and I—and fought with the *shinai* (bamboo swords). I easily won the first, but gave him the second round, for he was drunk. Upon his victory, however, Yokone became decidedly unpleasant, and abused not only myself, but my honoured father as well. There were there the five of his pupils, one of whom had the contour of his flat head frightfully altered by me. There were also fair Miyo and other girls and women of the vicinity, listening to him.

"Poor Nejiro must have thought it a right good opportunity to revenge himself on the son of his master, who had rightly disgraced him. Nejiro challenged me for the third time. I was not yet intoxicated, and refused it. Nejiro's pupils chuckled and said loudly among them-



My *shinai* whistled savagely, and, before I knew, the good professor lay in an almost unconscious heap, blood streaming from a cut on his forehead, which he got on falling against a sharp-cornered step-stone.

Digitized by Google

selves that I was wise. Nejiro repeated the challenge; I accepted. My *shinai* whistled savagely, and, before I knew, the good professor lay in an almost unconscious heap, blood streaming from a cut on his forehead, which he got on falling against a sharp-cornered step-stone.

"You may well imagine the confusion that ensued. The banquet broke up suddenly, and Nejiro was hurriedly carried away on a litter. In sincere regret I offered to accompany the wounded professor to his house, but the poor fellow stopped me hysterically, saying: 'Avant! thou coward! Knowing me drunk, thou hast violated the courtesy of the true *samurai*-hood! Thou dog! none of thy hypocrisy!' I kept my peace. The situation was extremely awkward. As soon as Nejiro was carried out, I said my adieu to the host, not forgetting to add a word of gratitude as well as of deep regret. Mr. Hori would not listen to me; on the contrary, he invited me to stay with him, for the night at least, and even much longer if it did not inconvenience me much. I almost suspected the man. Somehow, however, I was loth to leave the house, so that I was easily prevailed upon.

"What next happened was that the following morning found the professor Nejiro Yokone groaningly ill, which caused a vacancy in no less a position than that of Mr. Hori's family tutorship, and I became temporarily installed in this grave office. The wheel of events was on its freak, I thought. Nevertheless, it gave me an immeasurable satisfaction, in the frame of mind I then was in. For happy were the days that followed — the flowers smiling gladsomely on the growing spring. My pupils—my Miyo and Taro—came regularly at nine in the morning, and we had our physical lesson. Taro, my great favourite, was quite an adept in *kenjutsu* (the long sword fencing), while his sister was wonderfully clever at *kaiken* (stiletto).

As I turned round she handed me a sealed note. I remember her face was death-like, and her hands shook.

"As a teacher I was to be sentimentless. But, the mischief! How pretty and contented Miyo used to look, as I stood by and took her by her hand, showing her the way. I used to wonder then if she knew that I was trembling. In the afternoons we read together the leaves of the old sages. With a long, honest face I used to expostulate on their love-forbidding tenets, while secretly my smouldering heart was in wild rebellion.

"It was probably for ten days that I stayed with Mr. Hori; but now I often look back to the time as if it were months. Ah, the visions of the past! how enlarged they appear, as time stretches out their shadows! Shadows? Nay! I see now the very path which led the way from my room's verandah to the centre of the orchard, and thence sloped upwards to the top of a little height! I used to tread on its winding course, evening after evening, and always unexpectedly meet my fair pupil tripping gently under the flowering trees. She was always with a chaperon who was her nurse. The latter would each time take it upon herself to explain to me that her young mistress had lately grown very sombre, in spite of the gaiety of the season, so that she thought an evening's stroll would do her some good. 'Come!' the woman would say, 'let us climb the hill and Mr. Okada will tell us of his travels and adventures.'

"On the top of the hill we used to sit under a large cherry-tree, and I would start squeezing about the corners of my memory bag, and, lo! the good woman would find some excuse or another to slip away for a time, and then reappear at the right moment—good soul that she was. Left alone, Miyo and I would talk on till the golden sunset gradually changed into the purple mist of distant mountains; and then, in the uncertainty of darkening twilight, our heart-strings, revealed on the flash of our glances, met and tied themselves into knots. Withal, Miyo and I were a pupil and a master distanced from each other by the rigour of an inherited spirit; our expressed love was therefore all the more intense.

"At night the good chaperon would come round to my room to lay out my bed-rig, and smilingly would whisper to me secrets—as she treasured them. The secrets, to be brief, were that when Yokone first opened his school in Yaita his fame as an accomplished master from the capital, and also as a man of courtly manners, spread far and wide, which opened his way into the Hori family. This Nejiro of rabid passions immediately burned his heart at the altar of the beautiful Miyo. But

Digitized by Google

Miyo would not have him. Neither would her parents, who soon found out the metal he was made of. But the professor insisted, and well he could do so, for a fencing master on the wing of popularity would have dared anything in those days. Things were indeed come to a very strange state when I made an appearance on the scene, and incidentally proved more or less a godsend to them. This much said, the woman would musingly add: 'You and mistress Miyo would make a beautiful couple.'

"'But, my good woman, she does not care for a homeless wanderer like me,' I would laughingly remark. To this she would excitedly reply:

"'My good sir, you do not know, indeed, you do not know! Heaven has prepared it for you, sir!'

"'How?'

"'Why, sir, the night before that unfortunate *sakura* festival my mistress dreamt—she confides everything to her old nurse, even her dreams, poor thing! She dreamed that she was praying to her patron deity to free her from the inordinate desires of her tutor, whom she did not and could not love. The god benignly opened his lips, and softly said:

"'"To-morrow there shall come a man from the south, journeying past thy home. He is a worthy man, though fleeing from persecution now. Thy brother shall follow him and he will love him. Even him shalt thou be, and be blessed!"'

"In days when love reasoned into mysteries—and who has not had those days?—I was deeply impressed with this bit of occult information. It was on a rainy night that the good woman told me this. I sat up late and long, after she was gone, losing myself in the land of fancies and visions! But it was a dream after all, for on the morrow I rose uncommonly early, after a disturbed sleep, and as I was looking out of my room, with sad, uneasy heart, over the shorn orchard, whose majestic robes of only the day before now lay bespattered over the muddy ground, the old nurse startled me from behind.

"As I turned round she handed me a sealed note, and was gone in a minute. I remember her face was death-like, and her hands shook. The note read: 'With an extreme regret, both my father and myself learn that you are an advocate of the foreign-intercourse policy, and also that the Professor Yokone intends denouncing you to the authorities as soon as he is well enough to come out, which may be to-morrow. I dare not believe all, but it will be for your good if you will leave here immediately on receipt of this note.' It was signed Miyo!

"I read it, and my heart throbbed wildly. I read it over and over again and tore it into shreds. As I recall the occasion, I see before me now my own face, hot-white, quivering, and twitching, and the bloodshot eyes standing on their ends! I stood there on the edge of the room rigid, but trembling—the joys of yesterday suddenly quenched, and the cherished dreams of the future cruelly crushed in the wild awaking of the present. The storm of angry despair, of thirsting revenge, of blind fury, came surging up, but went.

"For in a few moments I had said quietly to myself: 'Poor innocent girl! If she finds a devil in me, I should not blame her. Wiser than she would any moment send me up the cross if only they knew my sympathies and opinions. But the time has not yet come for me; I shall yet awhile bow to fate in ignominy.'

"But I was certain that the time was coming. I calmly made up my little portmanteau and walked out of Mr. Hori's house, without bidding a word of farewell to anybody, which I could not according to the tenour of that evictionary document. They must, I thought, have been glad to get rid of me. And I wended my way, lost in the clamour of jarring thoughts within me—hardly conscious of where I was going.

"Vigilance was severe in Yedo at that time, with its ins and outs of strangers, who daily lost their individuality in the mighty waves of its swarming population; there was more safety there than anywhere else for a person of my circumstances, though the risks were no less. It was this thought, I suppose, which led me eastward out of that little town of Yaita that gloomy morning, and found me the next eve buying a passage on the boat bound from Sekiya to Yedo. The boat took us safely down the river through the night, and about noon the next day we found ourselves at the foot of O-hashi, Yedo. The passengers were soon lost in different directions among the moving crowds of the great city.

"I was tired and wanted a rest. I started toward Bakurocho, the street of hotels. I had gone hardly ten yards when a familiar voice called to me, 'Sensei' (master), and there stood Taro on my left! I could scarcely believe my own senses. Subduing my excitement, I asked him what brought him out here, how he was, where he was bound, etc. He simply said:

"'I am going to follow you wherever you go.'

"I said that was very unreasonable. His only reply was:

"'Please master, take me to a quieter place; you are drawing a crowd round us.'

"He was right; the Yedo people, always keen-eyed for anything unusual, could not fail to see something curious in the contrast between my handsome pupil, in his north-country attire, and me, a wandering *samurai* with a smack of Southern air about me. This was very undesirable. I beckoned to Taro, and in silence we hurried to Bakurocho.

"Once landed in a secluded room in an hotel, he produced to me a letter. It was from Miyo again. There was a strangely forced calmness on Taro's face as he watched me run over the lines which made me see poor Miyo prostrating herself in deep grief, asking me my forgiveness for her last note, and pleading that it was a mortal sacrifice on her part to send me away, but that she thought it was for my sake. I suppressed my tears, in the presence of her brother as I was. I read on, and soon came to where it said: 'Taro wishes to see the world. He is determined. He has confided to me his whole heart, and his sister has taken all the responsibilities to his parents upon herself. He is young, but Taro is a noble youth.' She asked me to take Taro as a servant for her sake, for the sake of her pure love, which would ever be true to me!

"I read through the letter, and I was at my wit's end. I saw plainly that to try to induce Taro to go back to his parents was of no use—for a time, anyway. Yet I had my ambition, my aspiration to accomplish. My spirit of patriotism was stronger than my sentiment of love; and I could ill afford then to be hampered with the care of a country lad. It was a hard dilemma to solve. One thing was clear, and it was that if Taro was to accompany me at all he must be of one mind with me, or he would be an obstacle to every step I might take. For my course lay in what appeared diabolical to the eyes of the multitude of the day.

Digitized by Google

"I tried the truth of his heart in a hundred ways, but to my satisfaction his was like a diamond which glowed forth of its native brilliancy, as I unfolded to him gradually the secrets of my inner thoughts. Finally, I told him of the greatness of the Western civilization, and that Japan must no longer sit on the pedestal of her conceit and seclusion, like a pretty doll on its gilded stool, only to be snatched away and be made amusement of by the first rude hand that may dare do it, but that she must henceforth walk forth and seek her own way through the world. Those were profound moments when I took the veil off my heart and let him look into its very depths; and Taro responded to me with all the vigour of his youth.

"We stayed about a fortnight in the hotel, toward the end of which we sold out all our belongings and bought instead fishermen's craft and apparel. Our intention was to be on the water, and seek a chance to get on board an English steamer, which, it was rumoured, was to come up the bay at that time. I knew we would be given a passage by the Englishmen as far as they were concerned; but it was a dangerous venture, after all; if only our authorities knew of, or caught us in the attempt, we were sure to lose our heads. But to be brief, we were successful. And on the 12th day of June, 1864, we were safely landed at the port of London.

"But will you forgive it if it was done for love?"

"In England we little heeded the silly rudeness of the curious, nor could we lend ourselves to the overworked kindness of the you - poor - heathen sinners style of good Christians. We considered ourselves men with a mission. We were ashamed to pledge a promise to become missionaries, for a free course of study; but we were not ashamed to become humble menials that we might work for our own independent support.

"We worked hard and suffered much. When we had mastered English fairly well we set out on a lecture tour. It was a novelty—novelty always succeeds in England—and we saved enough to enable us to enter a college. Five years sped by as a dream. All that time Taro and I were like one; we always lived together. When I was ill he nursed me by day and by night—sweet and gentle, an angel of love to me. When he was sick, I, in my turn, did for him what brotherly care and tenderness could do, for he grew to be as dear to me as my own life, and more.

"The close of the fifth year of our stay in England brought us the glad news of the mighty change which gradually overtook Japan in favour of introducing European ideas. About the same time our presence in England became known to our home government, and they sent for us; they were sorely in need of anyone who knew anything of any foreign lands. When the news reached us Taro and I said:

"'Our time is come at last!'

"But such of our friends as were good Christians said:

"'Sad! sad! The heathen government are afraid that their people should learn too much of Christianity, and are therefore calling them all back, under false pretences. Sad! sad!' Fortunately, we had not become Christians enough to swallow all this, and we were soon on board a steamer, homeward-bound, with joyous hearts.

"The winter's sea was high now and then, but all went well, and we were now within a day's distance of Yokohama. The night was approaching; darkness fell over the trackless ocean. The ship rushed onward, breaking through the foaming waves; sea-urchins glittered and flowed below, while above, the clear cold sky shone forth with its stars, like revelation! Between heaven and earth, the speckled finiteness and blazing immensity, dashing forward through darkness, I stood agitated on the deck, changing thoughts of past, present, and future, of pride, glory, meekness, and trembling hope, flitting like visions in me! I was silent for many a minute. Taro stood by me; he, too, looked deeply occupied. But his eyes were intently on me, with strange sadness in them.

"'Why, what is the matter?' I said to him. He simply replied, 'Oh, nothing!' with a forced smile; but I saw his lips quiver as he said this. My heart became strangely alarmed, as with some unknown apprehension. I hurried him down into the cabin. He sat on the couch, and I too did so, close by him. He again looked up into my face absorbedly. It was a surprise that overtook me this time.

"Taro was no longer the Taro of yesterday, of adventures, of determined looks, of fearless manliness, of youthful vigour. His looks were now those of feminine fondness, tinged with unexpressed fear and timidity.

"He looked excited, but with maidenly coyness. This was so strange, so unfathomable, that I could not help wondering long in silence.

"But Taro broke it suddenly, though with some difficulty:

"'Do you think deceiving is right in some cases?'

"I bluntly answered 'No,' which brought on his face a look of torturing emotion.

"Then after a moment or two he again said:

"'But will you forgive it if it was done for love, and that with no base motive?'

"'I dare say yes,' I answered, 'but why do you ask me such a question?'

Google

"Taro gave me no reply; instead, to my amazement, he laughed out merrily, and said:

"'Do you st.ll love my sister?'

"'Well—a—yes; but she must be married by this time!' I heaved a deep sigh.

"'Oh! no,' returned Taro, pleasantly, and continued, 'But do you love me still?'

"'You silly boy, what does all this mean?' I demanded. Taro only smiled and looked at me fondly.

"I was never more mystified in my life than during this conversation. All was clear to me, however, when the next day Taro, now grown to be a tall, robust fellow, greeted us in his full, hearty voice, just outside the custom-house of Yokohama—not the Taro of my romantic companionship of the five eventful years, but Taro the brother of my beloved Miyo. For my Taro was my Miyo in disguise, whom I had loved as her brother. The dream was fulfilled, and my story ends here.

"My good audience, it is needless to add that my Miyo and I were soon afterwards married; and such is the story of a Japanese love. Who dares say love, pure and simple, noble and romantic, is impossible in Japan?"

K. T. Takahashi.

When will the British Flag be hoisted in Pretoria?

£250

WILL BE GIVEN

TO THE

READER of 'PEARSON'S WEEKLY'

WHO WILL

TELL US THE EXACT DAY

UPON WHICH THE

British Flag

will be Hoisted

in Pretoria.

All You Have to Do:

Fill in the coupon below.

Send it in to us as soon as you like.

Send as many coupons as you like.

If two competitors name the exact day the money will go to the one who gives the correct hour of that day. If two or more give the correct day and hour the £250 in full will go to him whose coupon we received bearing the earliest date of sending in.

The Editor's decision must be final, and competitors must only enter on that understanding.

The Editor reserves the right to close this competition at a day's notice.

Address all envelopes to "War Editor," Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Pretoria Coupon. *Jan. 20, 1900.*

Date.....

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Day..... *Hour*.....

We shall take it that competitors mean the year 1900 unless they state otherwise.

This notice and coupon also appears every week in the ILLUSTRATED WAR NEWS, HOME NOTES, PASTIMES, PEARSON'S WEEKLY, and the BIG BUDGET.

READERS OF SHORT STORIES MAY ENTER WITH THIS COUPON.

Digitized by Google

SHORT STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of Mr. Harry Lander's "Lucky Bargee" to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source must be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. W. Lavers, of 31 Asylum Road, Peckham, S.E. Attempts for this week's prize may deal with any subject, and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, January 22nd. Post-cards only, please.

"Countee Collars!"

An Irishman arriving at New York went into a laundry where a Chinaman was employed to count out the collars. Giving him a slap on the shoulder, which made the Chinaman jump, he exclaimed:

"How are ye, Mike? Shure yours is the first Oirish face oi've seen since oi left home."

The Chinaman, who happened to be counting collars at the time, looked at him severely and went on with his work. The Irishman gave him another slap on the shoulder and said:

"Phwat part ov Oireland d'd ye come from?"

The Chinaman replied angrily:

"Wayway, mee mee countee collars!"

"It's a loi!" exclaimed Pat, "there's not a county in all Oireland ov that name!"

Why He Spoke the Truth.

"Now," plaintively perorated the perspiring preacher, "is there a man in this congregation who never spoke a cross word to his wife? If there is, let him rise."

Dead silence, in the midst of which a fat, red-faced man of forty solemnly rose to his feet.

"Can you truly say," said the preacher, with a warning look in his eye, "that you never spoke a single cross word to your wife?"

"I can," said the fat man emphatically, "I am a bachelor." (Sensation.)

How the Walls Ran Down.

The Irishman who went up in the hotel lift without knowing what it was did not recover from the surprise. He relates the story in this way:

"I wint to the hotel, and says I: 'Is Misther Smith in?'

"'Yes,' says the man with the sojer cap. 'Will yez step in?'

"So I steps into the cupboard, and all of a suddint he pulls the rope, and—it's the truth I'se telling yez—the walls of the building began running down to the cellar.

"'Och, murther!' says I, 'what'll become of Bridget and the children which was left below there?'

"Says the sojer-cap man: 'Be aisy, sorr; they'll be all right when yez comes down.'

"'Come down, it is?" says I. 'And it is no cupboard at all, but a haythenish balloon that yez got me in!'

"And wid that the walls stood stock still, and he opened the door, and there I was wid the roof just over my head! And, begorra, that's what saved me from goin' up to the hevins intirely!"

Should Have Told Him.

An ex-army surgeon, discussing recent scientific discoveries the other day, said the Röntgen rays and the location of bullets brought to mind an old story about a general officer, upon whom, having been wounded in the fleshy part of his leg, the surgeons made many incisions.

At last, growing tired and worn out with pain, he asked if they were nearly through dressing his leg.

"I am looking for the ball," said the operating surgeon.

"Why didn't you say so before?" roared the officer. "I have the ball in my pocket."

Why Women Wear Their Hats Indoors.

"Excuse me, sir," said the man in the row behind, "but would you mind asking your wife to remove her hat? I assure you that I cannot see a thing on the stage."

"I'd like to oblige you, sir, but it is impossible," said the man addressed. "We live out of town, and we must get home to-night."

"What has that got to do with it?"

"What has that got to do with it? Why, our train goes twenty minutes after the end of the performance, and it takes her an hour to put that hat on."

How to Clear your Stock.

At a recent fair in Paris one of the stall-holders who, despite the good weather and the multitude of passers-by, had done very little business, had recourse to an original method of clearing out his stock. While delivering his usual speech on the excellence of his half-franc articles, a gentleman, in a state of the greatest excitement, pushed his way through the crowd, and, in a white fury, exclaimed:

"There you are, you rascal! No wonder you can sell these things at half a franc when you still owe me a franc and a half for them. But the matter shall be looked into. I am going straight away to fetch the police!"

The excited gentleman disappeared. Our salesman trembled in his shoes, and entreated the bystanders to relieve him of his wares. This they were ready enough to do, in the belief that they were about to get all sorts of nice bargains at a third of their real value.

And the trick was done, for the pretended wholesale merchant was merely an accomplice of the "Cheap Jack."

Digitized by Google

He Improved.

IN Germany, some weeks ago, a railway flagman at the crossing at a small station thought he had the influenza when all the other employés of the line were getting leave of absence for the same cause, and applied to the company's doctor to be examined.

The doctor could not spare the time to stop at such a small place, so he telegraphed to the flagman to be standing beside the track when the train went past with his tongue out, and he would examine him on "the fly."

The flagman dutifully stood with his tongue out all the time the train was slowly passing his station, and the next day the company received from passengers a dozen complaints of the impertinent conduct of one of its employés at that station.

A Strange Tongue.

SOME members of a German ship's crew had occasion to visit a shipbuilding yard in England, and in the course of their walk entered a paint-shop where two Irishmen were at work.

The visitors talked together in their own language, greatly to the mystification of the British workmen, and at last one of the painters could not restrain his curiosity.

"I say, Mike," said he to his fellow labourer, "and do you know what these fellows are saying?"

"Arrah, now, Pat," answered the second man, "don't be showing your ignorance. They're spakin' shorthand."

The Worst Kind of Bargain.

A THEATRICAL manager told a story against himself the other day. An actor came to him and applied for an engagement. There did not seem to be much need of him, but his demands in the way of salary were very modest, and the manager said to him:

"Well, you may consider yourself engaged. I fancy I can find something for you to do."

The newly-engaged man looked at the manager questioningly.

"How about a contract?" he asked.

"Oh, never mind a contract. We'll have a verbal contract."

There was a look of mild reproach in the eyes of the man as he answered sorrowfully:

"Sir, the last time I made a verbal contract I drew a verbal salary."

The Danger of Kissing.

"MR. CLINKER," said the thrillingly beautiful heroine of this tale, as she turned her head and looked straight into the eyes of the young man, who was sitting as close to her on the sofa as it was possible to get, "there are some things which even a girl of my—er—advancement will not easily brook. When you first entered this room, half-an-hour ago, you bowed formally as you shook hands, did not dream of calling me by my Christian name, and, when you sat down, you took a chair which was at a convenient distance away. You had not——"

"But, my dear Miss Spingler——"

"Don't interrupt me, sir. You had not been here ten minutes before your chair was six feet nearer where I sat. In another five minutes you called me 'Dear.' Shortly afterwards you deliberately sat down on the sofa next to me. It was then that you attempted to take my hand. You need not deny it. You know it is too true. And now, sir——"

"Hear me. I——"

"And now," said the young girl, her slight form trembling with emotion, her eyes blazing, her whole attitude expressive of the deepest concern, "I want you to distinctly understand that if you should so far forget yourself as to attempt to kiss me, you do so at your own peril!"

A Possible Dilemma.

A JUDGE of the old school, loving port wine and hating trouble, is said to have once summed up a very complicated case in the following terms: "You have all heard the evidence, you have also heard what the learned counsel have said. If you believe what the counsel for the plaintiff has told you, your verdict will be for the plaintiff; but if, on the other hand, you believe what the defendant's counsel has told you, then you will give a verdict for the defendant. But if you are like me, and don't believe what either of them has said, then I'll be blowed if I know what you will do."

A Very Severe Mother.

A VERY estimable widow has a son who is far from estimable. His poor mother is nearly broken-hearted. She was confiding her troubles one day to an old and trusted friend.

"I am afraid," said her friend, "that you are not firm enough with John; you are too easy with him."

"On the contrary, I am afraid sometimes that I am too harsh."

"Why, what have you ever done?"

"Oh, I haven't done anything, but I have talked to him a good deal."

"What have you said?"

"Why, I have said, 'John! John! John!' and other severe things."

A Courting Episode.

A YOUNG couple, evidently from the country, were walking down Regent Street one day, apparently looking for something very much in particular. At last they stopped before a large jeweller's window, in which were displayed a number of wedding-rings. They stood by the window for a few moments, discussing some urgent question, the big, clumsy-looking fellow, who measured about six feet, apparently hesitating.

"Go on, George," said the girl, who scarcely reached his elbow. "What's the use of backing out now you've got so far?"

"I don't half like to, Mary," he replied; "that slick-looking fellow in there is sure to grin at me."

"What difference does it make whether he laughs or cries?" exclaimed the girl. "If you haven't the pluck I'll go myself."

"That's it, Mary," was the response; "if you'll do the asking I'll come with you and look on."

Followed by her bashful lover, the little woman marched boldly in and chose the wedding-ring, while her swain twirled his hat, blushed, and looked on. As they left, the shopman gazed after them with a thoughtful air and remarked:

"I admire Mary's pluck, but I shouldn't care to be George ten years from now."

Digitized by Google

THE ANGEL OF THE REVOLUTION

By GEORGE GRIFFITH

CHAPTER LVIII. (*continued*).

WITHIN a week everything was working as smoothly as though no revolution had ever taken place. All officials whose honesty there was no reason to suspect, were retained in their offices, while those who were dismissed were replaced without any friction. All the affairs of government were conducted upon purely business principles, just as though the country had been a huge commercial concern, save for the fact that the chief object was efficiency and not profit-making.

Money was abundantly plentiful, and the necessaries of life were cheaper than they had ever been before. Perhaps the principal reason for this happy state of affairs was the fact that law and politics had suddenly ceased to be trades at which money could be made. People were amazed at the rapidity with which public business was transacted.

The President and his Council had at one stroke abrogated every civil and criminal law known to the old Constitution and proclaimed in their place a simple comprehensive code which was practically identical with the Decalogue. To this a final clause was added stating that those who could not exist without breaking any of these laws would not be considered as fit to live in civilised society, and would therefore be effectively removed from the companionship of their fellows.

While the internal affairs of the Federation in America were being thus set in order events had been moving rapidly in other parts of the world. The Tsar, the King of Italy, and General le Gallifet, who was now Dictator of France in all but name, were masters of the Continent of Europe. The Anglo-Teutonic Alliance was a thing of the past. Germany, Austria, and Turkey were completely crushed and the minor powers had succumbed.

Britain, crippled by the terrible cost in ships and men of the victory of the Nile, had evacuated the Mediterranean after dismantling the fortifications of Gibralter and Malta, and had concentrated the remains of her fleets in the home waters to prepare for the invasion, which was now inevitable as soon as fair winds and fine weather made it possible for the war-balloons of the League to cross the water and co-operate with the invading forces.

The Tsar, as had been expected, had not even deigned to reply to Tremayne's summons to disarm, and so the last arrangements for bringing the forces of the Federation into action at the proper time were pushed on with the utmost speed. The blockade of the American and Canadian coasts was rigidly maintained, and no vessels allowed to enter or leave any of the ports. All the war-ships of the League had been withdrawn from the Atlantic, and the great ocean highway remained unploughed by a single keel.

On the 10th of October the *Ithuriel* returned from her second trip to the West, with the refusal of the British Government to recognise the Federation as a duly constituted Power, or to have any dealings with its leaders. "Great Britain," the reply concluded, "will stand or fall alone, and even in the event of ultimate defeat, the King of England will prefer to make terms with the Sovereigns opposed to him rather than with those whose acts have proved them to be beyond the pale of the law of nations."

"Ah!" said Tremayne, as he read the royal words, "the policy which lost the American Colonies for the sake of an idea still rules at Westminster, it seems. But I am not going to let the old Lion be strangled in his den for all that.

"Natas was right when he said that Britain would have to pass through the fire before she would accept the Federation, and so I suppose she must, more's the pity. Still, perhaps it will be all for the best in the long run. You can't expect to root up a thousand-year-old oak as easily as a mushroom that only came up the day before yesterday."

The day after the reply of the British Government had been received, a cypher despatch came from Sydney, *via* San Fransisco, announcing that all was ready for the proclamation of the Federation in Australia, and adding that a large fleet of Chinese and Japanese war-ships had bombarded Brisbane, and was steaming south upon Sydney.

"We must stop those fellows at once," said the President to Arnold, who was with him when he read the despatch. "How soon can you have the *Ithuriel* and half a dozen of the other ships ready to start? This will be a splendid, opportunity for us. We will smash up the heathen Chinee, save Australia, and then proclaim the Federation before popular gratitude has time to cool. Nothing like striking while the iron's hot."

"Almost immediately," replied Arnold. "I have eight ships lying at the rendezvous on the Alleghanies ready to take the air at once, and I can put what fresh cylinders are wanted into the *Ithuriel* in half an hour after we get there. We can reach Australia in about seventy hours, and probably get to Sydney just as the fun is beginning. Are you coming with us?"

"Yes. Everything is going on perfectly here, and I can easily get away for a few days. We will go on board at once."

It was then two o'clock on the afternoon of the 11th. Two hours later the aerial squadron took the air, crossed the Pacific in three days, and arrived off Port Jackson just as the invading fleet had forced its way into the harbour.

It went to work with swift and terrible effectiveness upon the war-ships crowded into the narrow waters of the inlet. The Celestials, who had never even heard of the air-ships before their shells began rending their vessels to fragments, took them for supernatural demons of the air sent by the gods to destroy them.

Digitized by Google

Within ten minutes after the terrible cannonade began they had fallen into utter panic and completely lost control of their ships. Steaming hither and thither in wild attempts to get out into the open water, they collided and rammed and sank each other almost as fast as they were sunk by the shells rained upon them from the air. Tremayne's orders were not to spare a single craft, and they were carried out to the letter.

It was the first battle in the war between civilisation and semi-barbarism, and that was to be a war of extermination. By nightfall not a ship or torpedo-boat of the whole fleet was left that had not either been captured or run ashore. The next morning the signal of the Revolution was flashed throughout the Colonies, and within twenty-four hours the plain blood-red flag of the Federation was floating over all the Government houses in Australasia.

CHAPTER LIX.

Alone Against the World.

It is now time to return to Britain, to the land which the course of events had so far appeared to single out as the battle-ground upon which was to be fought the Armageddon of the Western World—that conflict of the giants, the issue of which was to decide whether the Anglo-Saxon race was still to remain in the forefront of civilisation and progress, or whether it was to fall, crushed and broken, beneath the assaults of enemies descending upon the motherland of the Anglo-Saxon nations; whether the valour and personal devotion, which for a thousand years had scarcely known a defeat by flood or field, was still to pursue its course of victory, or whether it was to succumb to weight of numbers and mechanical discipline, reinforced by means of assault and destruction which so far had turned the world-war of 1904 into a succession of gigantic butcheries, such as had never been known before in the history of human strife.

When the allied fleets, bearing the remains of the British and German Armies which had been driven out of the Netherlands, reached England, and the news of the crowning disaster of the war in Europe was published in detail in the newspapers, the popular mind seemed suddenly afflicted with a paralysis of stupefaction.

Men looked back over the long series of triumphs in which British valour and British resolution had again and again proved themselves invulnerable to the assaults of overflowing numbers They thought of the glories of the Peninsula, of the unbreakable strength of the thin red line at Waterloo, of the magnificent madness of Balaclava, and the invincible steadiness and discipline that had made Inkerman a word to be remembered with pride as long as the English name endured.

Then their thoughts reverted to the immediate past, and they heard the shock of colossal armaments, compared with which the armies of the past appeared but pigmies in strength. They saw empires defended by millions of soldiers crushed in a few weeks, and a wave of conquest sweep in one unbroken roll from end to end of a continent in less time than it would have taken Napoleon or Wellington to have fought a single campaign. Huge fortresses, rendered, as men had believed, impregnable by the employment of every resource known to the most advanced military science, had been reduced to heaps of defenceless ruins in a few hours by a bombardment, under which their magnificent artillery had lain as impotent as though they had been the culverins of three hundred years ago.

It seemed like some hideous nightmare of the nations, in which Europe had gone mad, revelling in superhuman bloodshed and destruction, a conflict in which more than earthly forces had been let loose, accomplishing a carnage so immense that the mind could only form a dim and imperfect conception of it. And now this red tide of desolation had swept up to the western verge of the Continent, and was there gathering strength and volume day by day against the hour when it should burst and oversweep the narrow strip of water which separated the inviolate fields of England from the blackened and blood-stained waste that it had left behind it from the Russian frontier to the German ocean.

It seemed impossible, and yet it was true. The first line of defence, the hitherto invincible fleet, magnificently as it had been managed, and heroically as it had been fought, had failed in the supreme hour of trial. It had failed not because the sailors of Britain had done their duty less valiantly than they had done in the days of Rodney and Nelson, but simply because the conditions of naval warfare had been entirely changed, because the personal equation had been almost eliminated from the problem of battle, and because the new warfare of the seas had been waged rather with machinery than with men.

In all the war not a single battle had been fought at close quarters; there had been plenty of instances of brilliant manœuvring, of torpedo boats running the gauntlet and hurling their deadly missiles against the sides of battle-ships and cruisers, and of ships rammed and sunk in a few instants by consummately-handled opponets, but the days of boarding and cutting out, of night surprises and fire ships, had gone by for ever.

The irresistible artillery with which modern science had armed the war-ships of all nations had made these feats impossible, and so had placed the valour which achieved them out of court. Within the last few weeks scarcely a day had passed but had witnessed some mighty ironclad or splendid cruiser, which had set out a miracle of offensive and defensive strength, return little better than a floating ruin, wrecked and shattered almost beyond recognition by the awful battle-storm through which she had passed.

The magnificent armament which had held the Atlantic route had come back represented only by a few crippled ships almost unfit for any further service. True, they and those which never returned had rendered a splendid account of themselves before the enemy, but the fact remained—they were not defeated, but they were no longer able to perform the Titanic task which had been allotted to them.

So, too, with the Mediterranean fleet, which, so far as sea-fighting was concerned, had achieved the most splendid triumph of the war. It had completely destroyed the enemy opposed to it, but the victory had been purchased at such a terrible price that, but for the squadron which had come to its aid, it would hardly have been able to reach home in safety.

In a word, the lesson of the struggle on the sea had been that modern artillery was just as effective whether fired by Englishmen, Frenchmen, or Russians, that where a torpedo struck a war-ship was crippled, no matter what the nationality or the relative valour of her crew, and that when once the ram found its mark the ship that it struck went down, no matter what flag she was flying.

And then behind and beyond all that was definitely known in England of the results of the war, there were vague rumours of calamities and catastrophes in more distant parts of the world which seemed to promise nothing less than universal anarchy and the submergence of civilisation under some all-devouring wave of barbarism.

All regular communications with the East had been stopped for several weeks; that India was lost was guessed by intuition rather than known as a certainty. Australia was as isolated from Britain as though it had been on another planet, and now every one of the Atlantic cables had suddenly ceased to respond to the stimulus of the electric current. No ships came from the East, or West, or South. The British ports were choked with fleets of useless merchantmen to which the markets of the world were no longer open.

Some few venturesome craft that had set out to explore the now silent ocean had never returned, and every war-

Digitized by Google

ship that could be made fit for service was imperatively needed to meet the now inevitable attack on the shores of the English Channel and the southern portions of the North Sea. Only one messenger had arrived from the outside world since the remains of Admiral Beresford's fleet had returned from the Mediterranean, and she had come not by land or sea but through the air.

On the 12th of October an air-ship had been seen flying at an incredible speed across the south of England. She had reached London and touched the ground during the night on Hampstead Heath; the next day she had descended again in the same place, taken a single man on board, and then vanished into space again. What her errand had been is well known to the reader, but outside the members of the Cabinet Council no one in England, save the King himself, knew the object of her mission.

For fifteen days after that event the enemy across the water made no sign, although from the coast of Kent round about Deal and Dover, could be seen fleets of transports and war vessels hurrying along the French coast, and on clear days a thousand telescopes turned towards the French shore made visible the ominous clusters of moving black spots above the land which betokened the presence of the terrible machines which had wrought such havoc on the towns and fortresses of Europe.

It was only the calm before the final outburst of the storm. The Tsar and his allies were marshalling their hosts for the invasion and collecting transports and fleets of war-vessels to convoy them. For several days strong north-westerly gales had made the sea impassable for the war-balloons, as though to the very last the wind and waves were conspiring to defend their ancient mistress. But this could not last for ever.

Sooner or later the winds must sink or change, and then these war-hawks of the air would wing their flight across the silver streak, and Portsmouth and Dover, and London would be as defenceless beneath their attack as Berlin, Vienna, and Hamburg had been. And after them would come the millions of the League descending like a locust swarm upon the fields of eastern England, and after that would come the deluge.

But the old Lion of the seas was not skulking in his lair, or trembling at the advent of his enemies, however numerous and mighty they might be. On sea not a day passed but some daring raid was made on the transports passing to and fro in the narrow seas, and all the while a running fight was kept up with cruisers and battle-ships that approached too near to the still inviolate shore. So surely as they did so the signals flashed along the coast; and if they escaped at all from the fierce sortie that they provoked, it was with shot-riddled sides and battered top-works, sure signs that the Lion still had claws, and could strike home with them.

On shore, from Land's End to John o' Groats, and from Holyhead to the Forelands, everything that could be done was being done to prepare for the struggle with the invader. It must, however, be confessed that, in comparison with the enormous forces of the League, the ranks of the defenders were miserably scanty. Forty years of universal military service on the Continent had borne their fruits.

Soldiers are not made in a few weeks or months; and where the League had millions in the field, Britain, even counting the remnant of her German allies, that had been brought over from Antwerp, could hardly muster hundreds of thousands. All told, there were less than a million men available for the defence of the country; and should the landing of the invaders be successfully effected, not less than six millions of men, trained to the highest efficiency, and flushed with the rapid succession of unparalleled victories, would be hurled against them.

This was the legitimate outcome of the policy to which Britain had adhered since first she had maintained a standing army instead of pursuing the ancient policy of making every man a soldier, which had won the triumphs of Crecy and Agincourt. She had trusted everything to her sea-line of defence. Now that was practically broken, and it seemed inevitable that her second line, by reason of its miserable inadequacy, should fail her in a trial which no one had ever dreamt it would have to endure.

A very grave aspect was given to the situation by the fact that the great mass of the industrial population seemed strangely indifferent to the impending catastrophe which was hanging over the land.

Vague threats of "eating the Russians alive" if they ever did dare to come were heard, but beyond this, and apart from the regular army and the volunteers, men went about their daily avocations very much as usual, grumbling at the ever-increasing price of food, and here and there breaking out into bread riots wherever it was suspected that some wealthy man was trying to corner food for his own commercial benefit, but making no serious or combined efforts to prepare for a general rising in case the threatened invasion became a fact.

Such was the general state of affairs in Britain when, on the night of the 27th of October, the north-west gales sank suddenly to a calm, and the dawn of the 28th brought the news from Dover to London that the war-balloons of the League had taken the air and were crossing the Straits.

CHAPTER LX.

THE BATTLE OF DOVER.

UNTIL the war of 1904 it had been an undisputed axiom in naval warfare that a territorial attack upon an enemy's coast by a fleet was foredoomed to failure unless that enemy's fleet had been either crippled beyond effective action, or securely blockaded in distant ports. As an axiom secondary to this, it was also held that it would be impossible for an invading force, although convoyed by a powerful fleet, to make good its footing upon any portion of a hostile coast defended by forts mounting heavy long-range guns.

These principles have held good throughout the history of naval warfare from the time when Sir Walter Raleigh first laid them down in the early portion of his "History of the World," written after the destruction of the Spanish Armada.

But now two elements had been introduced which altered the conditions of naval warfare even more radically than one of them had changed those of military warfare. Had it not been for this the attack upon the shores of England made by the commanders of the League would probably either have been a failure, or it would have stopped at a demonstration of force as did that of the great Napoleon in 1803.

The portion of the Kentish coast selected for the attack was that stretching from Folkestone to Deal, and it would perhaps have been difficult to find in the whole world any portion of sea-coast more strongly defended than this was on the morning of October 28th, 1904, and yet, as the event proved, the fortresses which lined it were as useless and impotent for defence as the old Martello towers of a hundred and fifty years before would have been.

As the war-balloons rose into the air from the heights above Boulogne good telescopes at Dover enabled their possessors to count no less than seventy-five of them. Fifty of these were quite newly constructed, and were of a much improved type, as they had been built in view of the practical experience gained by the first fleet.

This aerial fleet divided into three squadrons, one, numbering twenty-five, steered south-westward in the direction of Folkestone, twelve shaped their course towards Deal, and the remaining thirty-eight steered directly across the Straits to Dover. As they approached the English coast they continually rose until by the time they had reached the land, aided by the light south-easterly breeze which was then blowing, they floated at a height of more than five thousand feet.

All this while not a warship or a transport had put to

Digitized by Google

sea. The whole fleet of the League lay along the coast of France between Calais and Dieppe, under the protection of shore batteries so powerful that it would have been madness for the British fleet to have assumed the offensive with regard to them. With the exception of two squadrons reserved for a possible attack upon Portsmouth and Harwich, all that remained from the disasters and costly victories of the war of the once mighty British naval armament was massed together for the defence of that portion of the coast which would evidently have to bear the brunt of the attack of the League.

Ranged along the coast from Folkestone to Deal was an armament consisting of forty-five battle-ships of the first, second, and third classes, supported by fifteen coast-defence ironclads, seventy armoured and thirty-two unarmoured cruisers, forty gunboats, and a hundred and fifty torpedo boats.

Such was the magnificent fleet that patrolled the waters of the narrow sea as impotent for the time being as a fleet of Thames steamboats would have been in face of the tactics employed against it by the League. Had the enemy's fleet but come out into the open, as it would have been compelled to do under the old conditions of warfare, to fight its way across the narrow strip of water, there is little doubt but that the issue of the day would have been very different, and that what had been left of the ships would have been driven back, shattered and defeated, to the shelter of the French shore batteries.

But, in accordance with the invariable tactics of the League, the first and most deadly assault was delivered from the air. The war-balloons stationed themselves above the fortifications on land, totally ignoring the presence of the fleet, and a few minutes after ten o'clock began to rain their deadly hail of explosives down upon them. Fifteen were placed over Dover Castle, and five over the fort on the Admiralty Pier, while the rest were distributed over the town and the forts on the hills above it.

In an hour everything was in a state of the most horrible confusion. The town was on fire in a hundred places, from the effects of the fire-shells. The Castle hill seemed as if it had been suddenly turned into a volcano; jets of bright flame kept leaping up from its summit and sides, followed by thunderous explosions and masses of earth and masonry hurled into the air, mingled with guns and fragments of human bodies.

The end of the Admiralty Pier, with its huge blocks of stone wrenched asunder and pulverised by incessant explosions of dynamite and emmensite, collapsed and subsided into the sea, carrying fort, guns, and magazine with it; and all along the height of the Shakespeare cliff the earthworks had been blown up and scattered into dust, and a huge portion of the cliff itself had been blasted out and hurled down on to the beach.

Meanwhile the victims of this terrible assault had, in the nature of the case, been able to do nothing but keep up a vertical fire, in the hope of piercing the gas-envelopes of the balloons, and so bringing them to the earth. For more than an hour this fusillade produced no effect; but at length the concentrated fire of several Maxim and Nordenfelt guns, projecting a hail of missiles into the sky, brought about a result which was even more disastrous to the town than it was to its assailants.

Four of the aerostats came within the zone swept by the bullets. Riddled through and through, their gas-holders collapsed, and their cars plunged downwards from a height of more than 5,000 feet. A few seconds later four frightful explosions burst forth in different parts of the town, for the four cargoes exploded simultaneously as they struck the earth.

The emmensite and dynamite tore whole streets of houses to fragments, and hurled them far and wide into the air to fall back again on other parts of the town, and at the same time the fire-shells ignited, and set the ruins blazing like so many furnaces. No more shots were fired into the air after that. There was nothing for it but for British valour to bow to the inevitable and evacuate the town and what remained of its fortifications, and so with sad and heavy hearts the remnant of the brave defenders turned their faces inland, leaving Dover to its fate. Meanwhile exactly the same havoc had been wrought upon Folkestone and Deal. Hour after hour the merciless work continued until by three o'clock in the afternoon there was not a gun left upon the whole range of coast that was capable of firing a shot.

All this time the ammunition tenders of the aerial fleet had been winging their way to and fro across the Strait, constantly renewing the shells of the war balloons.

As soon as it began to grow dusk the naval battle commenced. Numerically speaking, the attacking force was somewhat inferior to that of the defenders, but now the second element, which so completely altered the tactics of sea fighting, was for the first time in the war brought into play.

As the battle-ships of the League steamed out to engage the opponents, who were thirsting to avenge the destruction that had been wrought upon the land, a small flotilla of twenty-five insignificant-looking little craft with neither masts nor funnels, and looking more like half-submerged elongated turtles than anything else, followed in tow close under their quarters. Hardly had the furious cannonade broken out into thunder and flame along the two opposing lines than these strange craft sank gently and silently beneath the waves. They were submarine vessels belonging to the French navy, an improved type of the *Zédé* class which had been in existence for more than ten years.

These vessels were capable of sinking to a depth of twenty feet and remaining for four hours without returning to the surface. They were propelled by twin-screws worked by electricity at a speed of twenty knots, and were provided with an electric search-light which enabled them to find the hulls of hostile ships in the dark.

Each carried three torpedoes, which could be launched from a tube, forward, so as to strike the hull of the doomed ship from beneath. As soon as the torpedo was discharged the submarine boat spun round on her heel and headed away at full speed in an opposite direction, out of the area of the explosion.

The effects of such terrible, and, indeed, irresistible engines of naval warfare were soon made manifest upon the ships of the British fleet. In the heat of the battle, with every gun in action, and raining a hail of shot and shell upon her adversary, a great battle-ship would receive an unseen blow, struck in the dark upon her most vulnerable part, a huge column of water would rise up from under her side, and a few minutes later the splendid fabric would heel over and go down like a floating volcano, to be quenched by the waves that closed over her.

But as if it were not enough that the defending fleet should be attacked from the surface of the water and the depths of the sea, the war-balloons, winging their way out from the scene of ruin that they had wrought on shore, soon began to take their part in the work of death and destruction.

Each of them was provided with a mirror set a little in front of the bow of the car, at an angle which could be varied according to the elevation. A little forward of the centre of the car was a tube fixed on a level with the centre of the mirror. The ship selected for destruction was brought under the car, and the speed of the balloon was regulated so that the ship was relatively stationary to it.

As soon as the glare from one of the funnels could be seen through the tube reflected in the centre of the mirror a trap was sprung in the floor of the car, and a shell charged with dynamite, which, it will be remembered, explodes vertically downwards, was released, and, where the calculations were accurately made, passed down the funnel and

Digitized by Google

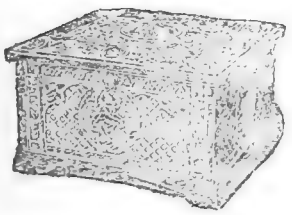
NICOLE FRERES'

RÉGINA AND POLYPHON MUSICAL BOXES and CLOCKS

Play THOUSANDS of Tunes by means of Interchangeable Metal Discs, including all the Latest Operas, Songs, Dances, and Sacred Music.

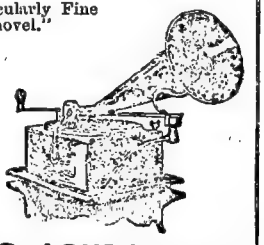
The World.—"Invaluable at Country Houses." *Court Journal.*—"Particularly Fine Instrument." *Ladies' Pictorial.*—"Distinctly charming and quite novel."

AT ALL PRICES FROM 16s. 6d. UPWARDS.



New Department: EDISON'S

PHONOGRAPHS & GRAMOPHONES.



All Dealers, or please write for fully Illustrated Catalogue No. 13, post free to readers of "Short Stories."

OLD MUSICAL BOXES REPAIRED AT OUR LONDON WORKSHOPS.

NICOLE FRÈRES Ltd. (Estab. 1815), 21 ELY PLACE, HOLBORN CIRCUS, LONDON, E.C.

HAVE YOU EVER TRIED KEATING'S LOZENGES FOR YOUR COUGH?

DR. GABRIEL, M.D., L.R.C.P.

writes from Routh Park, Cardiff, Sept. 28th.

"I have now prescribed them for the last 8 years in my hospitals and private practice, and find them of great benefit. I certainly and most strongly recommend them."

Sold everywhere in Tins 1/1½ each.

A SUM of from 12s. to 25s. per week can be earned in spare hours or evenings by either sex everywhere.—Send addressed envelope for particulars to Box 24, Eclipse Works, 89 Aldersgate Street, E.C.

DRUNKENNESS

CURED. This can be done with or without patient's knowledge. Send me a stamp and I will tell you how. (Send no money.) Address, in confidence, Mrs. C. H. Room 8, 1.5 Oxford Street, London, W.

VARICOCELE.

Every man suffering from Varicocele and the allied troubles, should send for treatise, describing their Causes, Symptoms, Results, and Successful and Painless Treatment without surgical operation or the use of cumbersome trusses and electrical appliances. Will be sent sealed, post free, three stamps.

S. S. MURRAY,
7 Southampton Row, London, W.C.

ALL FAT PEOPLE

can safely **Reduce Weight and cure Corpulency permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are stand, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to IMPROVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without Change of Diet. An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets are admirable.*"

Send 2s. 6d. to THE TRILENE CO., Sole Proprietors, 16 Finsbury Pavement, London.

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

Princess Liechtenstein writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send your excellent tablets directly." Mr. Canham, 87 Alexandra Road, Norwich: "Tablets cured my wife of extreme stoutness; it has never returned." Mrs. H. Cox, 28 Walnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The Tablets reduced me 1½ stone." Mrs. S. Alexander, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They reduced me 2st., and I am cured." Mrs. Darnley-Smith, of Land-cove Vicarage, Ashburton, says: "Tablets have reduced me very much." Mrs. Crossley, of Rose Hill, Torver, Coniston, says: "I weigh much less and can breathe so much easier; I am delighted."

KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR.

KAPUTINE

SAFE REMEDY CURES

HEADACHE and NEURALGIA

IMMEDIATELY,

And is sold by all leading Chemists in Packets of 18 Doses, 1s.

To ANYONE HAVING THE LEAST DIFFICULTY, it will be sent post free for 12 Stamps by "KAPUTINE Ltd.," Huddersfield; or, on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope, A. M. Kaputine, Huddersfield, you will receive a free sample.

The fact that "KAPUTINE" is recommended by many leading Medical Men, and is used in National Hospitals and Infirmaries proves that it is THE, THE recognised SAFE REMEDY FOR HEADACHES.

Refuse Substitutes and demand "KAPUTINE," the Safe Remedy. There is no substitute "LIKE IT"; nothing "AS GOOD"; nothing "SIMILAR."

KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR. KSR.

Digitized by Google

exploded in the interior of the vessel, bursting her boilers and reducing her to a helpless wreck at a single stroke.*

Every time this horribly ingenious contrivance was successfully brought into play a battleship or a cruiser was either sunk or reduced to impotence. In order to make their aim the surer the aerostats descended to within three hundred yards of their prey, and where the missile failed to pass through the tunnel it invariably struck the deck close to it, tearing up the armour sheathing and wrecking the funnel itself so completely that the steaming-power of the vessel was very seriously reduced.

All night long the battle raged incessantly along a semicircle some twelve miles long, the centre of which was Dover. Crowds of anxious watchers on the shore watched the continuous flashes of the guns through the darkness, varied ever and anon by some tremendous explosion which told the fate of a warship that had fired her last shot.

All night long the incessant thunder of the battle rolled to and fro along the echoing coast, and when morning broke the light dawned upon a scene of desolation and destruction on sea and shore such as had never been witnessed before in the history of warfare. On land were the smoking ruins of houses, still smouldering in the remains of the fires which had consumed them; forts which twenty-four hours before had grinned defiance at the enemy were shapeless heaps of earth and stone and armour-plating torn into great jagged fragments; and on sea were a few half-crippled wrecks, the remains of the British fleet, with their flags still flying and such guns as were not disabled firing their last rounds at the victorious foe.

To the eastward of these about half the fleet of the League, in but little better condition, was advancing in now overwhelming force upon them, and behind these again a swarm of troop-ships and transports were heading out from the French shore. About an hour after dawn the *Centurion*, the last of the British battle-ships, was struck by one of the submarine torpedoes, broke in two, and went down with her flag flying and her guns blazing away to the last moment. So ended the battle of Dover, the most disastrous sea-fight in the history of the world, and the death-struggle of the Mistress of the Seas.

The last news of the tremendous tragedy reached the now panic-stricken capital half an hour before the receipt of similar tidings from Harwich, announcing the destruction of the defending fleet and forts, and the capture of the town by exactly the same means as those employed against Dover. Nothing now lay between London and the invading forces but the utterly inadequate army and the lines of fortifications which could not be expected to offer any more effective resistance to the assault of the war-balloons, than had those of the three towns on the Kentish coast.

CHAPTER LXI.

Beleaguered London.

A month had passed since the battle of Dover. It had been a month of incessant fighting, of battles by day and night, heroic defences and dearly-bought victories, but still of constant triumphs and irresistible progress for the ever-increasing legions of the League. From sunrise to sunrise the roar of artillery, the rattle of musketry, and the clash of steel had never ceased to sound to the north and south of London as, over battlefield after battlefield, the two hosts which had poured in constant streams through Harwich and Dover had fought their way, literally mile by mile, towards the capital of the modern world.

Day and night the fighting never stopped. As soon as two hostile divisions had fought each other to a stand still, and from sheer weariness of the flesh the battle died down in one part of the huge arena, the flame sprang up in another, and raged on with ever-renewed fury. Outnumbered four and five to one in every engagement, and with the terrible war-balloons raining death on them from the clouds, the British armies had eclipsed all the triumphs of the long array of their victories by the magnificent devotion that they showed in the hour of the death-struggle of the Empire.

The glories of Inkermann and Balaclava, of Albuera and Waterloo, paled before the achievements of the whole-souled heroism displayed by the British soldiery standing, as it were, with its back to the wall, and fighting, not so much with any hope of victory, for that was soon seen to be a physical impossibility, but with the invincible determination not to permit the invader to advance on London save over the dead bodies of its defenders.

Such a gallant defence had never been made before in the face of such irresistible odds. When the soldiers of the League first set foot on British soil the defending armies of the North and South had, with the greatest exertions, been brought up to a fighting strength of about twelve hundred thousand men. So stubborn had been the heroism with which they had disputed the progress of their enemies that by the time that the guns of the League were planted on the heights that commanded the Metropolis, more than a million and a half of men had gone down under the hail of British bullets and the rush of British bayonets.

Of all the battle-fields of this the bloodiest war in the history of human strife none had been so deeply dyed with blood as had been the fair and fertile English gardens and meadows over which the hosts of the League had fought their way to the confines of London. Only the weight of overwhelming numbers, reinforced by engines of destruction which could strike without the possibility of effective retaliation, had made their progress possible.

Had they met their heroic foes as they had met them in the days of the old warfare, their superiority of numbers would have availed them but little. They would have been hurled back and driven into the sea, and not a man of them all would have left British soil alive had it been but a question of military attack and defence.

But this was not a war of men. It was a war of machines, and those who wielded the most effective machinery for the destruction of life won battle after battle as a matter of course, just as a man armed with a repeating rifle would overcome a better man armed with a bow and arrow.

Natas had formed an entirely accurate estimate of the policy of the leaders of the League when he told Tremayne in the library at Alanmere, that they would concentrate all their efforts on the reduction of London. The rest of the kingdom had been for the present entirely ignored.

London was the heart of the British Empire and of the English-speaking world, for the matter of that, and therefore it had been determined to strike one deadly blow at the vital centre of the whole huge organism. That paralysed, the rest must fall to pieces of necessity. The fleet was destroyed, and every soldier that Britain could put into the field had been mustered for the defence of London. Therefore the fall of London meant the conquest of Britain.

(To be continued.)

*This is merely a modification of the Range-Finder now in use for long-range artillery.—Author.

Pearson's War Map.

LATER EDITION.

You cannot follow the war intelligently without a War Map. When purchasing, get the best one on the market, which is, of course,

. . *P.W.'s.* . .

Price, 6d.; in cloth case, 1s.; mounted on cloth and in a cloth case, 2s.

Digitized by Google

£100.
GIVEN AWAY
EACH MONTH

Pearson's
"TALKING" PUZZLE.

THE GREATEST EDUCATIONAL PASTIME OF THE AGE.

DON'T STOP

looking at it. Buy one from your newsagent, or send to us for one and

WIN THIS PRIZE

So simple anyone can do it, and all have an equal opportunity.

PRICE 1/-. *POST FREE, 1/1½.*

From C. ARTHUR PEARSON Ltd., Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

The Brain Gymnasium.

ON this page, under the title, "The Brain Gymnasium," will appear each week a series of puzzles calculated to occupy the attention of the competitors, with interest and profit to themselves, during the long winter evenings. Many of the tasks set will be comparatively easy of solution, while others will be designed with a view to taxing the abilities of the most proficient in this direction.

In each of the competitions a prize of ten shillings will be awarded to the sender of the first correct solution dealt with, and to the sender of the next five c rrect ones will be presented, in the case of the odd number competitions, one of our silver pencil cases, and, in the case of the even number competitions, a copy of a popular six-shilling novel.

Solutions must be written on separate postcards, and must reach the Editor, SHORT STORIES, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C., by Monday, January 29th, 1900. Mark the postcards "Brain Gymnasium, No. 16," "Brain Gymnasium, No. 17," etc., according to the number of the competition of which the solution is sent.

No. 16.

A C X B Y Z
B F E D C A

* * * * * *

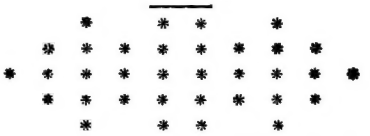
FOR the above cryptogram, the alphabet has been numbered according to a certain rule. If in place of the above letters their cryptogram be inserted, it will be found that in each case the second row is exactly twice the value of the first. Add the two lines together, and put the corresponding ordinary alphabet letter represented by the figure. A word signifying "a prank" will then be found.

No. 17.

A A B C E E E E H I L L N
N O O R R R S S T T T W U

WITH the above letters form six words, and arrange them so that the first and every alternate letter form together the name of a royal residence.

No. 18.



THE central horizontal line represents the name of a British hero. Using the letters contained in it, fill in the other asterisks so that the eight vertical rows, excluding the first and last, give words signifying "a wand," "to register," "a poem," "grants," "a theatre," "a measure of length," "one defeated," and "a conjunction."

No. 19.

H H S F L L N T F T H F R N G P N N T T H F R.

THE above are the consonants in their proper order of a well-known proverb. Fill in the vowels.

No. 20.

THE following cryptogram represents a well-known quotation from Longfellow:

H P T S K N G X K M N S G B E I V I G F U P Q O V I G S T V V I, V I G S G B T F P P D T T E U T P M C T V Z G B T T P F U U!

SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLES, Dec. 30.

No. 1. THIS is the only dAy of all The week on whIch I AppreciaTe rEst.—**SATIATE.**

No. 2.

T	R	A	P
R	A	G	E
A	G	E	S
P	E	S	T

No. 3. KIPLING — RECESSIONAL.

No. 4. Nore; fOrty; VIctoria; Sun; fIght; traiN drEnch; danceS; Stifle. — NOISINESS

No. 5. HETEROGENEOUSNESS.

No. 6. EGO.

Printed and Published by C. ARTHUR PEARSON, LTD., at Pearson's Weekly Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

ASTHMA

CHRONIC BRONCHITIS,

CHRONIC LUNG DISEASES,

CONSUMPTION (Early Stages),

BLOOD SPITTING,

EFFECTIVELY TREATED & FINALLY REALLY LASTINGLY CURED BY THE

Famous Weidhaas Home Treatment.

PULMONARY INSTITUTE,
16T.A. Buckingham Road, BRIGHTON.
ALSO ACCOMMODATION FOR IN-PATIENTS.

A careful study of the case, and candid opinion expressed if the treatment will be effective,

FREE OF CHARGE.

PERSONAL EXAMINATION NOT NECESSARY.

Hundreds of splendid genuine Testimonials speak of the wonderful results gained. Booklet to be obtained POST FREE.

Apply to the above Address, describing your Complaint, and mention if you suffer from cold feet.

It lies in the reach of everybody, and does not interfere with occupation.

CURABLE

5/6 LADIES' TAILOR-MADE COSTUME SKIRTS in Navy and Black Serge 5/6 each. In ordering please give waist measurement and length of Skirt in front. Satisfaction Guaranteed. Postage, 6d. extra. DAVIS & CO., 70 GREAT PERCY STREET, LONDON, W.C.

DO YOU KNOW

that in every copy of this week's

HOME NOTES

A PAPER PATTERN of this **Fashionable Skirt** is to be found?

HOME NOTES is the BEST and DAINTIEST of Ladies' Weeklies.

ONE PENNY.

A different Pattern given away each week.

Splendid Amusement for Winter Evenings.

THE NEW MULTIPHONE

The most wonderful Musical Instrument ever invented. It is practically a Violin, Violoncello, Guitar, Banjo, Mandoline, Zither, and Harp all combined, for it can be easily played by anyone so as to exactly imitate any of these delightful instruments. It sounds splendid with pianoforte accompaniment, and when several are played together has the same effect as a string duet, trio, or quartet.

Besides being a most charming Musical Instrument, the **MULTIPHONE** also imitates cows, hens, chickens, the neighing of a horse, the braying of a donkey, the barking and howling of dogs, the screeching of the owl, and all the various noises of the farmyard, &c., &c. It also produces a thousand other weird and marvellous effects, and can be made to give forth a sound only equalled by the delightful and soul-inspiring warbling of

10,000 CATS.

NOTICE.—The **MULTIPHONE** is not a worthless toy, but a genuine, well-made Monochord Musical Instrument. It is equally beautiful either for Sacred, Secular, Classical, Operatic, or Dance Music, and when played as a Guitar or Harp makes a lovely accompaniment to the voice.

Full direction for all the above are given **gratis** with each instrument.

N.B.—The **MULTIPHONE** is so simple that anyone can thoroughly master it **in a few hours**, without any previous knowledge of Music.

Price **FOUR SHILLINGS.** Will be sent per Parcels Post to any address on receipt of Postal Order. Foreign and Colonial postage, 1/6 extra.

SPECIAL NOTICE.—The MULTIPHONE cannot be purchased at any shop, and can only be obtained PER PARCEL POST direct from the

MUSICAL SUPPLY Co. (M Dept.), 6 Wood St., Liverpool.

Order at once to prevent disappointment. The finest present in the World.

THE BEST PRESENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IS A BOOK.

HEROES of the NINETEENTH CENTURY.

By G. BARNETT SMITH, Author of "History of the English Parliament," "Life of Gladstone," &c.

Vol. I.—Wellington, Garibaldi, Gordon, Grant.
Vol. II.—Nelson, Roberts, Sir Chas. Napier, Livingstone.

Large Crown 8vo. Each volume contains 16 full-page illustrations, and is handsomely bound in cloth gilt, bevelled boards, gilt top, price **5/-** each.

"Here are records of valour, pluck, and heroism, which make reassuring reading in the hour of war, and which stimulate one's trust in the successors of these warriors of the past . . . Finely executed reproductions of photos of the men written of in this work lend additional interest to the biographies."—*Dundee Advertiser.*

PIRATE GOLD.

By J. R. HUTCHINSON, Author of "Romance of a Regiment," "Quest of the Golden Pearl," &c. With 8 Illustrations by Ernest Smythe. Crown 8vo. cloth, price **5/-.**

"Will endear itself to lovers of a good sea yarn in which pirates and hidden treasure play an important part."—*Aberdeen Free Press.*

JOHN OF STRATHBOURNE.

A ROMANCE OF THE DAYS OF FRANCIS I.

By R. D. CHETWODE, Author of "The Knight of the Golden Chain." Crown 8vo. cloth. Illustrated by Ernest Smythe. Price **3/6.**

"We can only say that had it appeared anonymously it might have passed for the handiwork of Mr. Stanley Weyman, and it would be difficult to give higher praise."—*Times.*

"So rapid is the succession of incident, and so vividly is everything portrayed, that the reader becomes perfectly oblivious of his surroundings from the moment he begins to read, nor does he recover his normal state till he reaches the last page, when the emotional tension is released and the hero's affairs satisfactorily settled."—*Glasgow Daily Mail.*

A DELIGHTFUL FAIRY BOOK.

PRINCE UNO: Uncle Frank's visit to Fairyland.

Illustrated by W. D. STEVENS. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, gilt edges, **3/6.**

"We feel sure this pleasant fairy story, revised and embellished as it has been by excellent illustrations, will amuse little folk as much as it will touch and interest their elders."—*The Daily Telegraph.*

LITTLE MISS ROBINSON CRUSOE.

By Mrs. GEORGE CORBETT, Author of "The Adventures of an Ugly Girl," "The Young Stowaway," &c. With Illustrations by A. Kemp Tebby. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, price **3/6.**

"There is always room for an adventure story, in which, by way of change, we have a heroine instead of an hero. . . . This is a very readable and enjoyable story."—*Globe.*

"The book will afford abundant amusement."—*Daily News.*

LONDON: C. ARTHUR PEARSON LTD., HENRIETTA STREET, W.C.

NEVER PUT OFF TILL TO-MORROW THE . .

BEECHAM'S PILLS

YOU SHOULD TAKE THE NIGHT BEFORE . . .

How does that advice strike you?

These renowned Pills are composed entirely of medicinal Herbs, and are warranted free from mercury or other poisonous substance. They can harm no one, and may be given to children, or to the aged and infirm, with perfect safety. They cleanse the stomach and bowels and purify the blood; invigorate the whole nervous system, and give tone and energy to the muscles. In the preparation of BEECHAM'S PILLS the most scrupulous care is taken, and the ingredients form the most successful combination that has ever been discovered for the complaints enumerated in this advertisement.

OVER SIX MILLION BOXES SOLD YEARLY

SOLD EVERYWHERE IN BOXES, **1/1½** (56 Pills) and **2/9** each.

BEECHAM'S TOOTH PASTE

RECOMMENDS ITSELF.

It is Efficacious, Economical, Cleanses the Teeth, Removes Tartar, Prevents Decay, and is a Pleasant and Reliable Dentifrice.

In Collapsible Tubes. Of all Druggists, or from the Proprietor for **1/-** (Postage Paid).

Digitized by Google